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[PRICE ONE PENNY.]



["YOU DON'T MEAN TO TELL ME, NELL, THAT YOU HAVE BEEN OUT?"]

A PLAIN GIRL.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

A DAY or two after the receipt of that letter from my father I came suddenly face to face with him in the street—the one long, narrow, hot street that runs through Sandgate, and subsequently ascends to the downs.

I was walking with George, and, of course, took no notice; but I felt a good deal startled all the same, notwithstanding that this rencontre was not quite unexpected.

No one would have possibly recognised in him Tom Kelly, the stone-breaker.

He was now dressed as a gentleman, and the change was wonderful. He was a very handsome man still.

His hair was quite grey, so was his moustache—he had a moustache now. His eyes were very dark, and sunken, and piercing, and were by far the most striking feature in his face.

They looked full into mine as we passed on

the pavement, their glance speaking whole volumes of warning.

Although that glance was a mere flash, and did not occupy the fifth of a second, George noticed him, and said, in a puzzled tone,—

"I'm sure I know that fellow's face! Where have I seen him before?"

To this query I made no reply. I was not going to assist his memory.

The question seemed to exercise his brain to a considerable extent. He kept on saying to himself,—

"Where have I seen that face before?"

At length some fishing-tackle in a shop window distracted his attention. He stopped in front of it, and looked in. Then he went into the shop, leaving me outside.

Flies, and lines, and landing-nets were not interesting articles in my opinion; and, besides, my mind was very much absorbed in something quite different.

As I stood gazing abstractedly at the fly-books and fishing-rods some one—a man—came and looked into the window, too—some one in a light tweed overcoat, and pushed something quickly into my hand (a bit o-

paper), and said, in a low voice, "To-morrow," and then lounged on.

I wondered if George had noticed anything, for he was in the doorway. There was a look of mingled displeasure and astonishment in his eyes as they met mine. I felt scarlet with confusion, and tried to hide my flushed face behind my parasol.

"I say, Nellie," he asked, as he joined me, "did that fellow"—looking after my father—"speak to you?"

"Speak!" I stammered. "What on earth put such an idea into your head? Are people in the habit of speaking to strangers?"

"Can't say; but it seems like it. You must not be seen hanging about shop windows by yourself," he exclaimed, taking my hand and placing it on his arm.

It was the hand in which I held the scrap of paper, and, needless to add, kept my fingers tightly clenched in an almost vice-like grasp. If George were to see a bit of it sticking out, or if George were to read it, what a shame it seemed to have a secret from him!

I was torn between conflicting duties—my duty to my father and my duty to him; and



what would he think if he knew that all my hopes and energies were bent on placing his commanding officer in the dock, to be tried for his life?

Little—little did he dream of the tragic thoughts that were covered by my pretty little brown straw bonnet.

We met another military married couple, which gave me an opportunity of secreting my *billet doux*, as we changed partners—I walking with the man and George with his wife.

I was exceedingly glad that she would not and could not find time to accept my pressing invitation to come in to five o'clock tea, for I wanted to be alone.

I rushed up to my room the instant we got in, and tore open and devoured my little note. It said,—

"DEAR NELLIE,—Meet me at the second milestone on the Hythe road to-morrow afternoon at four o'clock. I have much to say to you. Do not fail me."

But how was I to contrive this, when to-morrow, as the day of our great regimental polo match up at the camp, I had been promising myself the pleasure of seeing George again?

He was captain of our team. We were to have a tent, and tea and ices, for the world and his wife; and, more than this, I had promised to drive two girls up there in the T-cart, and chaperone them, though they were a good deal older than I was.

How on earth was I to get out of this? How—how? I bent my elbows on my dressing-table, and asked myself this very embarrassing question. As I did so George looked in, and said,—

"Hallo, Nell; tea is ready, and I want a cup before I go up to camp. You have not got a headache, have you?" anxiously coming over, and laying his hand on my shoulder.

"Yes, a terrible one; but I'll come down. Tea will do it good," rising with simulated languor.

"You walked too far in the sun—that was it. You must not let it happen again," lifting my face by placing his hand under my chin, and looking tenderly into it.

I tried to meet his honest gaze without flushing, but I did not quite succeed. I had told him an untruth, and was rather a new hand at the business.

I had no more a headache than he had, but I saw that in feigning temporary illness lay my only chance for to-morrow.

Poor George! How utterly he believed in me! I felt a wicked, most deceitful girl as he led me downstairs, insisted on my lying on the sofa, carefully lowered the blinds, put a soft cushion under my head, and poured out and brought me my tea.

Next day I was no better, of course—if anything, rather worse, and unable to rise from my bed, and George was full of anxiety and self-trade.

The Miss Trotters received a note (penned by him) putting them off, and he even went so far as to suggest that he should stay at home with me, and that a deputy captain might be found for the polo match. This was not to be thought of, naturally.

"As if anyone could take your place, George!" I cried, impressively. "What nonsense! Think of the folly of disappointing the whole team simply because I happen to have a bad headache! It's really only a headache. I've often had worse. You must go!"

My whole scheme, I told myself with great trepidation, would fall to the ground there and then if he did not. My feigned headache, my enforced absence from the polo, and my several stories would all be thrown away.

At half-past two o'clock he bade me a tender and lingering farewell, and, mounting his hack, galloped off to the scene of the polo match; and as I heard the clatter of his horse's hoof turning the corner of our street, or terrace, I sat up—quite myself, of course—rang the bell, and informed my maid that I

really felt so much better that I would get up and dress.

I was not long over my toilet. It was a good two miles' walk to the place of rendezvous, and along a hot, dusty road. Dusty! It was so thick that it was like walking on flour.

A little after three I started, thickly veiled, garbed in my very coolest cotton dress, and carrying my largest parasol.

Oh, dear me! what a hot walk it was! and how nervous I was lest passers-by in hansoms or victorias en route to the polo on the camp heights—how terrible it would be if they were to recognise Mrs. Karlake trudging along in the heat and amid volumes of dust, alone on the Hythe-road, deliberately turning her back upon the game at which her husband's play was one of the chief attractions!

My heart beat uncommonly fast as I recognised people, who luckily did not recognise me.

At last I reached the goal, and found my father there waiting for me. He praised my punctuality, and said,—

"You look hot and tired, Nellie. I'm sorry I've brought you so far, but it was safer. Come along into this cool, narrow lane. There's a log you can sit and rest on, and meanwhile listen to me while I talk to you very seriously."

"Oh, if you knew all the awful stories I had to tell," I said, fanning myself with my handkerchief, "about getting away. It seems so strange, so unfair not to tell George. Father, you must let me tell George," I said, entreatingly. "Do, please, let him into the secret!"

"Tell him, if you like, but it will be fatal to my plans; and in the case of your repeating one single word of what you know you and I part for ever. I may find someone else who will be guided by what I wish—what I know will lead to success—silence! Of course I may not find such a person; the chances are that, when my only child goes against me, a stranger will do the same."

His voice as he spoke was hard and bitter, and cut me to the heart. I could scarcely keep back my tears.

"Father," I exclaimed, "would you not trust George?"

"I now trust no one. I've had a lesson for life; I am an experienced man. I know the worth of friends. Who stuck to me when I was down?—not one; and now that I have a chance—a small one, but still a chance—of eventually vindicating my good name, and of proving my innocence, my own daughter would thrust it aside for the mere sentimental consideration of unbewomening herself to a man called George—a brother officer of the very wretch whom I would hang down! Do you think he would stand by, for the mere credit of his corps—you little—little know how strong is that in every soldier's breast, it was once in mine—and not lift a finger as he saw you figuratively put a rope round his commanding officer's neck and drag him to the gallows? No; if you can't keep your word and be silent you may go; I have no need of you," standing up, and waving his hand towards the entrance to the lane, as if he were bowing me out of a room.

I gave in. What else could I do?

"Of course, if it must be so it must," I returned, faintly; "but my husband is always first with me, remember."

I was standing as I spoke, and I trembled so violently that I was obliged to lean against a tree whilst I endeavoured to recover composure.

"He was not always first. At one time—not so long ago—he was nothing to you. I am first; and, putting me aside, does the brand of shame that still lies on your maiden name bring no blush to your brow?"

"My name is his now," I answered, in a low voice.

My father was about to make an angry interruption, but I made a gesture to restrain him, and went on,—

"I will do all I can—all you wish. I can

say no more. Half measures in such a case are useless. You may make use of me as you will, do with me what you please, but don't keep me long in suspense. I am a bad actress, and whatever part I am to play, believe me, father, for your sake, I will do my very best, and enter into it with all my heart. Let me play it soon."

"That's the very thing I want you to do. There is not a day to lose. Any moment Kant may find out who you are—may be introduced to you as Mrs. Karlake—so there is every reason to strike quickly—I may say, at once. Are you prepared for this?" surveying me keenly.

"Quite," was my laconic reply.

"And your nerve will not fail you at the eleventh hour?"

"No," I answered, firmly.

"Humph! I'm glad you are so certain of yourself. I see, you have the Deane spirit. And now I will tell you my plan. You are to appear quite unexpectedly before Kant; you are to display to him the proofs of his guilt—the coat, the little book—and unless I am much mistaken he will be so completely overwhelmed that he will make a full and free confession—he will play our game; he will be so horrified and so shaken that he will place himself in our power; he will jump at the conclusion that the law has him at last."

"But how and when am I to see him?" I asked.

"Oh! leave all that to me. I'll arrange every detail when all is ready. I shall summon you at the eleventh hour, so that you may have no opportunity for tremors; and I rely on you to obey that summons without delay, demure, or question."

"You may rely on me," I said, rising as I spoke. "And now if you have no more to say at present I must be getting back. George thinks I am in bed. You cannot think how I have had to tell stories and manoeuvre to get here at all, and I do so hate deceiving him; I feel so mean—so small."

"If all goes well the day will soon come when I can go openly to your home, and claim you as my daughter Nellie; and you will not then grudge the little subtleties and white lies you have told to bring about such a result. I shall walk back part of the way with you—as far, at any rate, as I dare."

And he did accompany me a good portion of the way along that flat, hot, white road.

Oh! how thankful I was to get into my own cool little drawing-room once more! I planned at the clock, as I threw myself into the nearest chair. It was nearly six. Another moment I heard quick steps running up the stairs; the door was thrown open, and George came in in full polo costume—scarlet and white striped coat, leather boots, and red cap.

"So I hear you are up!" he said, eagerly. "I ran home to tell you that we had won. But," surveying me in astonishment, when his eyes had become accustomed to the darkened room (for the blinds had been lowered to keep out the blazing afternoon sun), "you don't mean to tell me, Nell, that you have been out?"

"Yes. I—I—thought as my head was better that a little fresh air, a short stroll, would do me good."

"A little fresh air! You look as if you had been for miles. A short stroll!" his eyes suddenly fastening on my unlucky shoes, which were fully displayed, and as white as any miller's. "Fred Bingham told me that he had seen you walking along the Hythe road, a couple of miles out, in all the heat of the sun. I told Fred that his eyes had played him false for once in his life, as to my certain knowledge you happened to be in bed with a splitting headache, and that you were awfully cut up at missing the polo match. But, perhaps, I was wrong, and Fred was right?" he asked, rather imperiously; and drawing himself up to his full height he seemed to be waiting for some reply, and for a few seconds I could not think of an appropriate one.

I stammered and coloured, and at last

muttered something "about having walked on farther than I intended."

"If you wanted air and exercise why did you not have out the cobs and drive out to see the match?" he asked, indignantly.

But again silence fell between us; this time a painful silence. I could find nothing to say. I was tired, hot, frightened, and cross. I merely took off my hat, threw it over on a sofa, and pushed my hand up through my curly fringe, and stared at George vacantly.

"I believe," said George, at last, "that you had a reason for your walk that you are afraid to reveal to me. What was it?" turning on me a face as white as death.

"George!" I said, suddenly starting up and putting both my hands on his shoulders, "it is not possible—not possible: that you could be jealous, and angry, and look at me like this. Just because I was so dull here all by myself, and yet not inclined for the bother of dressing and driving up there and talking to people, and went for a turn along the Hythe road by myself, you become quite tragic and demand—the reason! Now, George, dear," looking up in his rather stern face with a smile, for I could not bear him to be angry with me, "is it not all very silly? Are you not glad that no one heard you?"

"You are a rare, special pleader, Nell, that I will say; and you certainly make it sound silly enough," stooping and kissing me as he spoke; "but, on the other hand, hear my side of the story. You profess to be wild to see me lead our polo team to victory. You have rather more interest in the match than most—have hardly missed a day's practice—and when, to-day of all days, I leave you in bed, apparently half dead with a headache, and heart-broken with disappointment, I go reluctantly up to the match; and after the first goal has been taken a fellow comes up and tells me that he had seen you two miles out in the Hythe road in all the dust—and I promptly snub him for his pains."

"But alone, jealous George—walking alone!"

"Yes; but, my clever Nellie, you might have been going to meet someone;" but he says this in jest, and pinches my cheek as he makes the suggestion.

"And you won, of course?" I exclaimed, anxious to turn the conversation into any other channel.

"We did; but not so much of course, madam. We had a regular tussle, I can tell you, and only won by a goal. It was awfully exciting—it was so close. I wish you had been there. Landsell and Carow played up well."

"And who carried the ball in between the flags, and carried the team to victory?"

"I did, I believe," he answered, modestly, "but it was all luck. I raced Hackett for the ball, and my pony, Fireworks, had the legs of his; so I just got hold of the ball and raced in. There was great cheering, and I'm glad we won. I came straight off to tell you. I did not even wait for a pag. Annie Evans is coming down to see you to-morrow morning, and she is in an awful way for fear you won't be able to go to our ball on Wednesday; but you will, won't you?"

"Of course. I'm quite well," I answered, promptly.

"Set up by that walk of yours!" still harking back to that unlucky discovery. "Don't pretend you have a headache on Wednesday, whatever you do, and go out for a solitary stroll, for you have to receive all the guests, and that is a serious business before you, Mrs. K."

"I—I receive the guests?"

"Yes. Annie is not going—mourning, you know; and I'm next senior married officer. You will be hostess. Won't you be proud?"

"But you will be the host?"

"No—Colonel Kant will be that, of course; and, by-the-bye, I hear that he is very seedy. He was not up there this afternoon, for a wonder, and generally he is in his element, doing the agreeable to all the ladies."

"What a cruel misfortune for all the ladies!" I remarked, contemptuously. "I'm sure it spoiled their afternoon."

"They will see him, and he will see you, on Wednesday night," returned George, with an encouraging nod.

"Yes, I suppose there's no help for it," I returned, moodily; and here the entrance of James, with my very late afternoon tea, put an end to the present conversation.

CHAPTER XXIX.

I RECEIVED a letter from my father next morning by post. George was not present when it arrived; so I was but put to great straits to conceal it from him. This is what it said:—

"DEAR NELLIE.—The grand coup I had intended to play cannot be carried out. I find that K. must meet you before my plans are ripe. He will, of course, be present at the regimental dance, and you also. You cannot go on making excuse after excuse, as it will only excite suspicion; so you must dissemble, and be very agreeable to him. Do not let a remote suspicion enter his mind as to who you are. Attract him—dance with him—lure him into security, and then I shall lay my hand on him. Your extraordinary resemblance to your mother will strike him at first most painfully; but do not appear to notice it. This ball has thrown out all my plans; but they will be successful yet. I shall be there. Do not be surprised if you see me."

The next day was that of the ball. George was unusually and ridiculously anxious about my appearance—a very unusual frame of mind for him; but he was apparently satisfied when he saw me descending the stairs, bouquet in hand. My dress was cream satin, embroidered with gold. The body was chiefly composed of gold embroidery. I carried a bouquet—a huge one of dark red roses—which contrasted well with the background of my gold and white gown; and I think myself I looked very well indeed.

George had no doubts whatever on the subject. Of course, being hostess, I had to be the earliest arrival; so I was soon enveloped in a wrap (crimson plush and gold) and driving up the hill in our snug little brougham.

The mess-room presented a truly magnificent sight. The walls were covered with flags, carbines, and swords, and lances, arranged with great taste. Mirrors were let in at intervals into the wooden walls, and framed in real flowers. Two fountains of scent played at the end of the room in a kind of bower of palms and ferns, and coloured lights fell upon piled-up blocks of ice, arranged with moss in a kind of grotto, with the charitable intention of cooling the atmosphere.

The ante-room was a sight! The walls were covered entirely with tiger skins (officers' saddle cloths and officers' trophies), and the wonderful regimental gold racing cups were conspicuously to the fore. Here I was to take my stand, and shake hands with the company as they filed into the mess-room (i.e., ballroom).

I was early—in fact, the first lady to arrive; but nearly all the officers had appeared, and now formed a group about me, some talking of the polo, some of the fever, and three or four asking my candid opinion of the decorations, as I stood thus holding a kind of small preliminary "At Home."

Colonel Kant, glass in eye, and like the rest, in mess dress, strolled in in a languid, "monarch of all I survey" manner. His eyes—for I was watching him—took in the group in general, then me in particular. He stopped suddenly, became quite rigid-looking and of a grey, ashen colour, as he was then aware of my presence.

I do not know what wild speech he wanted to make. Once or twice he seemed to me to try to speak and failed. At length George, who had not been prepared for all this emotion or agitation like me, said, "You look ill, sir. Can I get you anything?"

"No—no," shaking his head and supporting himself by the back of a chair, still with his gaze fixed on me.

"Then let me introduce you to my wife," said George.

"Nellie," to me, "this is Colonel Kant!"

Colonel Kant mentioned something insupportable about "delight," and I think to find that I was no apparition, but a creature of flesh and blood, did delight him immensely.

I saw him take out his filmy-scented handkerchief and pass it more than once across his forehead; and he had need, for great big beads of perspiration were standing out there for every eye to see. A weight seemed lifted from his mind.

"So sorry, Mrs. Karslake"—coming closer to me as he spoke—"that I have not had this pleasure before."

"Ah! yes," I returned, not knowing what to say, "I was indisposed the day you called." This was not what Mark Twain would call a "stretcher." I was indisposed to see him, to put the case in plain words.

"Shall we take a little turn through the rooms before the company arrive?" he continued, offering me his arm.

Of course I had to accept it, and was led away to look at the gorgeous supper-room, to inspect the dozen flirtation corners, and to give my candid opinion of the selection of dance music, leaving George behind, gnawing his moustache, and looking very much puzzled, and not exactly pleased.

We talked of the heat, of the weather, of the dust, and of Shorncliffe for a while, and then all of a sudden he burst out impetuously,—

"Mrs. Karslake, of course you can't know it, but you are the living image of a friend of mine who is dead. You cannot think what a shock you gave me just now. You were like the dead come to life."

I could readily understand this, but said nothing.

"Now that I look at you attentively," gazing into my face with unnecessary close inspection, "of course I see a difference. You are younger, fairer, and handsomer, but I assure you that just now for a moment I thought it was herself."

"Yes, I thought you looked rather frightened at something," I said, rashly.

"Frightened!" indignantly. "No," and moved agitated. "My dear Mrs. Karslake, you have no idea what a sensitive man I am in that respect. You would be surprised if you could realise my feelings, and how the memory of long ago is ever present with me, and painful at times."

I could well believe it, but not in the sense he intended, the sentimental hypocrite!

"You will, I hope, allow me the honour of dancing with you," putting out his hand for my programme.

I bowed my head.

"What may I have?"

"Oh, a square dance," I replied, indifferently.

"Only a square dance! Oh, Mrs. Karslake, you don't mean to say that Karslake is jealous?"

"No, certainly not," flushing with anger. "but you need not have the square dance if you don't like."

Whereupon he at once assured me that half a loaf was better than no bread, and he would look forward to this particular dance as one of the proudest moments of his life.

"Don't talk nonsense," I said, rudely. "I detest nonsense."

"No, I am not talking nonsense, 'pop my word, but why should I not be proud when I shall be dancing with the prettiest girl in England?"

This was pretty well after about a quarter of an hour's acquaintance. I shrugged my shoulders, and said very bluntly,—

"I hate this kind of talk—let us go back to the ante-room. I hear carriages coming."

"You must not be angry with me, dear Mrs. Karslake. You are one of us, you know, and

George is an old friend of mine—a capital fellow. We were all astonished, though, at his marriage—I mean at his marrying.”

“I don’t see why you should have been surprised,” I asked.

“A—well—there were—er—reasons,” he said, with a world of suggestion in his horrible black eyes.

“If you are alluding to his engagement to Miss Norton pray don’t hesitate to speak. Don’t study my feelings. I know all about it,” I said, holding my head very high; “and now, really, Colonel Kant, we must go back.”

“Yes, but we need not separate, need we? We stand side by side. You take the place of Mrs. Kant, were there such a person. Would that there were, were she like her deputy! For the next half hour I shall imagine that you belong to me and I to you.”

“You had much better stop talking nonsense, Colonel Kant,” I said. “If you do not I shall go and dance and amuse myself, and leave you to receive your guests alone and play host and hostess.”

“I like to make you angry,” returned this odious person, with unabashed effrontery. “You look so nice when your eyes sparkle.”

No wonder, I said to myself, that he was detested by the officers and loathed by the ladies of the regiment.

The guests came in crowds, and for a long time I stood shaking hands and smiling society smiles and saying little civil things. It was fully eleven o’clock before I was free to go and dance and amuse myself. I could not really enjoy myself, though I was well dressed, and young, and pretty, and danced with George, who danced divinely.

Colonel Kant’s presence spoiled all. As we paused for breath during the *Manolo* I watched him across the room saying all manner of stupid things no doubt to a very stout lady in amber satin (who liked it). He was far more in the style of an Italian brigand than of a colonel of an English cavalry regiment, or he would make an ideal “conspirator,” with cloak and slouched hat. His nose had a cruel hook in its shape; the ends of his moustache had the same downward bend; ditto the corners of his narrow dark eyes; and yet, as his features were regular, his hair and moustache of the traditional raven blackness, no doubt some people (himself included) considered him decidedly a handsome man. His chest and shoulders and arms were well enough, but his legs fell away. They had a meagre, shrivelled look—the very legs for an assassin or a bandit!

George, I suppose, had been watching me as keenly as I had been watching his commanding officer; for when I withdrew my eyes they were met by his, and he said, in a not very genial tone, and with anything but a sweet expression,—

“After all your affectation of antipathy, you and Kant seemed to me to hit it off uncommonly well.”

“Of course, now I actually know him. I cannot be rude nor snub him as I should like to do for your sake,” I returned, with great presence of mind. “He, as you remarked to me once, would be sure to take it out of you. I am civil to him only in your interests—remember that.”

“Civil to him in my interests!” echoed George, pulling his moustache, meditatively. “Well, don’t let your anxiety for my welfare carry you too far in that direction. It does not do for a pretty woman to be too civil to him. Give him an inch he takes an ell—twenty ells.”

No need to assure me of this. I knew that already. “Come along,” I said, “don’t waste our time talking of him. Let us lose no more of this delicious waltz.”

CHAPTER XXX.

WHEN the very last note of the *Manolo* had died away we were obliged to stop, and we followed the crowd of other dancers who

were slowly filing towards the tea-room, but ere we reached it one of the husars accosted George hurriedly, saying,—

“Karslake, I want a word with you. Something about the arrangements”—and he buttonholed him, and said something very eagerly in a low tone; adding aloud, “You are the best person to see to it, and I’ll look after Mrs. Karslake.”

“Not at all!” I exclaimed. “Don’t think of me, please to recollect that I am not a guest—much less a stranger. Go away, both of you and I’ll sit here”—pointing to a window seat—“until you have quite done with George, and he can fetch me.”

“You are sure you don’t mind, Nell?” he said. I won’t be five minutes.”

“Not at all! I shall be glad of a rest,” I said, settling myself in a deep window-seat, and opening my fan as I spoke. “Don’t waste any more time, but go,” and they took me at my word and went.

I sat there for a few minutes alone. The passage I was in was a bye one—not familiar to strangers, who passed to the tea-room through another door. A verandah ran outside the mess-tent the whole way round, and just outside the window in which I was reposing there seemed to be a seat outside, and that seat occupied by two persons—lady and gentleman.

At first I was not thinking of them, and his low muttering and her affected little laugh made no impression. I was thinking how well George looked in his mess-dress—dark blue jacket, embroidered with gold lace, scarlet vest ditto. What a contrast to Colonel Kant! Stay, was not that Colonel Kant outside. Surely I knew his harsh, grating voice! He and his companion were seated immediately below the window, which was open, and were quite in the shade, for the verandah was only lit up by odd streams of light from the ball-room, through one or two open doors, and by the stars. My attention was arrested by hearing that magnet to everyone’s interest—my own name. It was the lady who uttered it.

“Mrs. Karslake—so amused to see her here and looking prettier than ever!” she was saying.

“Amused!” echoed her companion. “What makes you say that?”

“Don’t you know about her?” giggling as she spoke.

At this juncture no one knows better than myself that I ought to have got up and moved away, or coughed, or put my head out of the window and said, “Dear lady, I am listening to you; pray deal gently with my character,” but I sat quite still and gave no sign. I was as anxious to hear her little say as Colonel Kant himself. I knew that listeners never heard any good of themselves, and was prepared for the worst; but what form would that worst come in? Was she about to tell him that I was Philip Deane’s daughter?

“I know nothing about her beyond the pleasant fact that she is a very handsome girl, and that Karslake married her somewhere about six months ago, and that his family were not pleased. He picked her up in Ireland. I was on leave, and know nothing about her, as I said before. Pray enlighten me.”

“Picked her up in Ireland!—surely not. Does she give the idea of a girl from the wilds of the West? She is English to the tips of her fingers—a Londoner. Look at her air and manners, and the finished, easy style in which she received all your guests. She is no newly-caught Hibernian, believe me.”

“At any rate, I know that Karslake married her over there, but I don’t know where he met her, or who she was. In fact, I was not interested, but now I have seen her its another thing, and I come to you for information.”

“You remember hearing of how that rich Mr. Bellamy was left in the lurch—how he was actually waiting in the church, and the bride never appeared; in fact, bolted, and made him the laughing-stock of every club in London?”

“Oh! by Jove, yes,” laughing. “I should

think so, but serve him right for wanting to marry a girl who was thirty years younger than him.”

“Oh, I don’t know that. He has forty thousand a-year, and dozens of girls would have jumped at him.”

“Ah, perhaps so, but about Mrs. Karslake? Don’t let us wander away from her.”

“Oh, haven’t I told you? Why, she was the girl who ran away—she was the missing bride—the talk of London for at least three days.”

“You don’t mean it!” he exclaimed, with evident astonishment.

“Yes, but I do. She was a Miss Dennis, who lived with her grandmother, a wealthy, worldly person, who made the match. The girl was immensely admired, as you may fancy; and her grandmother made hay while the sun shone, and secured the best match of the season for her grand-daughter—in point of money—but the girl hated it, anyone could see that. I rather admired her for running away; I suppose it was her only chance of escape. There was something queer about the family, too. I forget what—stay, let me think”—(my heart throbbed madly as I listened)—“I believe it was insanity.”

“So you are here still,” said George. “I’m awfully sorry to have left you for so long, Nell, but there were a lot of girls who were getting no partners sitting round the wall, looking like so many thunder-clouds. It’s not our fault, but one lady here has actually brought seven girls instead of her son and husband, and another has chaperoned six! It’s very hard lines, for men are scarce, and lots of those here are too lazy to dance. I’ll have to do double duty, but I had intended dancing with no one but yourself.”

“Very sweet of you, dear, but I won’t be selfish. I am going to dance with plenty of people, and am engaged for the next,” looking at my card.

“Let’s see,” he said, taking it out of my hand. “Oh, so you are going to dance with Kant, are you?”

“Only a square,” soothingly.

“Yes. I would not have allowed you to dance anything else with him,” frowning as he spoke.

“George!” I exclaimed.

“Yes, you may say ‘George!’ in any tone you please, but it would make no difference. I don’t care about Kant—none of us do, and I know him, you pretty, little innocent—know him, not only wisely, but too well—and you do not, nor would he be a profitable study.”

No. 12 was the set of Lancers that I was to figure in as Colonel Kant’s partner, and when the “Trial by Jury” struck up, and he came to where I was sitting with Mr. Jervis, he made a low obeisance before me and said,—

“Our dance at last, Mrs. Karslake. I have secured a *vis-à-vis*,” crooking his elbow as he spoke and leading me away.

I could see, by various subtle signs, that since my companion knew more about me, and had heard the history of my escapade in London, I had gone up many degrees in his estimation. I was no longer a mere Irish nobody, having an unpleasant likeness that grated on his sensibilities, in spite of my pretty face. I was a kind of celebrity in my way. The mere fact of having been engaged to Bellamy, who was such a connoisseur of beauty, went a long way with him, not to speak of the *clat* which surrounded me in consequence of having thrown over the millionaire, in spite of his taste for beauty and for diamonds.

I was sharp enough in some ways, and read all this in Colonel Kant’s narrow black eyes as he stood beside me, eyeing me critically, and pouring into my ear volleys of hateful compliments.

I tried to be rude and brusque, but it only added additional piquancy to my attractions in his eyes. He laughed a detestable, mirthless laugh at all my sharp speeches.

“You need not repeat that,” I returned, apropos of a most laboured tribute to my beauty. “I am quite tired of the subject. I

did not make my own face, and I have no right to be concealed; but I am perfectly aware that I am pretty."

"Of course, George tells you that every day?" with an evil leer.

"Never mind what he tells me; it is your turn to advance, please—the lady opposite is waiting for you."

As he made his steps and bow and backed to and fro I watched him. I could hardly bear to think that I was dancing with a murderer—for such he surely was. I could scarcely realise it, though—which was fortunate. This thin, rather bent figure in gorgeous uniform—the host of the evening, the colonel of the regiment—who was now laying his hand upon his heart and bowing profoundly to his *vis-à-vis*—a countess—could he be the assassin that had committed that awful deed on the bleak, boggy track beside the Vann twenty long years ago to save himself from ruin?—who had hounded on the pack of deadly suspicions after his friend, and let him suffer, knowing his innocence?

I could hardly believe it. This brilliant scene, lit up by hundreds of lights, filled with the brave and the fair in their gayest garb; filled, too, with the jovial streams of merry, popular airs, as performed by our capital string band, and by an undercurrent of cheery male and female voices, was not the place in which to contemplate of that other scene—with its low hovels, its bleak expanse of peat, its sweeping winds, with their long, desolate moan, across the thousands of bleak acres of bog, or of those horrible holes, like big, open graves, filled up with water of inky blackness—in one of which it had been found. These thoughts flashed like lightning through my mind; and as Colonel Kant stepped back to take my hand to lead me forward, an irresistible shudder shook me from head to foot.

"What is the matter?" he asked, tenderly pressing my fingers. "I hope you have not had a chill? You look quite pale and frightened, and you don't feel faint, do you?"

"It's nothing—nothing," I returned hastily, pulling my hand away. "I can stand alone, thank you," sarcastically; "and as to the shudder, I suppose it was the legendary goose walking over my grave. Pray don't be alarmed on my account."

"Why do you drag your hand away?" he asked in an injured tone.

"Because I hate people to hold my hand, but never mind me. Tell me something about the people here. Who is that pretty girl over there in pink?"

"Pretty, you call her? Oh, Mrs. Karslake! where are your eyes?"

"Where are your own?"

"I have none for anyone in the room but yourself."

There was a simplicity and directness about this that fairly took my breath away. I merely stared at him in angry silence, and then turned my head away in a pointed manner.

"You are vexed. Forgive me. I'm always vexing you. I did not mean to annoy you."

"Then, please, be so good as to attend to the Lancers, and leave personal remarks alone," I returned, very stiffly.

He did. He talked of generalities and of regimental matters, the chances of war in Afghanistan, and the prospect of the regiment being ordered out. George had always kept this very unpleasant contingency well in the background, and I need not say that I listened with beating heart and breathless interest now.

"Did you not know that we are next but one on the roster for foreign service?" he inquired.

"I knew we might go soon—in a year or two."

"A year or two! Six months is more like it; but I daresay Karslake will sell out, only if we go on active service he won't, and active service is the deuce for married men."

"You have spoiled all my evening talking of such horrible things as fever, cholera, and

war," I said, as I was obliged to accompany him to the supper-room; "but it is best to know the worst, and be prepared for it," sitting down at a small round table as I spoke, and depositing my fan and bouquet on a vacant chair, whilst my cavalier took the one opposite to me, and began to study the *menu*.

"Soup, ma'am!" said a voice at my elbow.

I looked up quickly, and beheld a waiter, with a plate in either hand and a napkin under his arm. I was on the point of making some hasty ejaculation, for that waiter was my father. I shook my head, and he approached Colonel Kant with the same query.

Colonel Kant, who had been peering into the card in his hand, looked up; and what a start he gave. His elbow jerked a whole clump of wine glasses away into the middle of the room with a grand crash.

I never saw a face express more abject fear and horror than his as my father for a moment paused, and looked full into his eyes.

Then laying down the soup, he went over and began to pick up the pieces of glass very deliberately and carefully.

"Are you ill now?" I asked, leaning across the table. "You seem to have a shock. What is the matter—do tell me?"

He made me no answer, but beckoned over the mess-sergeant, and said, in a low, tremulous voice, quite audible to me,—

"Who—who—is that fellow there?" pointing to where my father was picking up the bits of glass.

"Oh! one of the men we have had up to help to wait from the 'White Hart'—a most steady, respectable man."

"A waiter, then?"

"Yes, sir."

"Ah!" feeling rather ashamed of himself, "just bring some champagne here."

He poured out a tumbler full, and drank it right off, but his hand shook as if he had the palsy.

"I'm not feeling very well, Mrs. Karslake."

To the waiter, "Fill Mrs. Karslake's glass. I don't know what has come over me this evening. My nerves are all on wires. That—er—waiter fellow was so awkward. Look what a smash we made of the glasses! That's the worst of getting in these new hands; they break more than they are worth."

I noticed that he scrupulously avoided looking at my father as he spoke; and then he added, to the mess-sergeant,—

"Sergeant Smith, don't let that fellow come into the supper-room again."

To which Sergeant Smith replied,—

"Very well, sir."

Neither I nor my companion had much appetite, and our conversation flagged.

How old, and gloomy, and withered, and timidly suspicious his face had become all of a sudden! However, he quaffed off several bumpers of champagne, and they seemed to raise his spirits, and apparently made up his mind to say, "Begone dull care," for after a kind of dropping fire of monosyllables he burst out into hilarious spirits, either due to the champagne or affected for the moment; but I had had enough of him, and seeing George I slyly beckoned to him; and, in spite of his commanding officer's entreaties, he took me away back into the ballroom, where I danced, and tried to forget the dreadful nightmare that was hanging over me, till daylight came stealing over the sea, and we all broke up and went home.

(To be continued.)

EVERY man has his chain and his clog, only it is looser and lighter to one man than another; and he is more at ease who takes it up than he who drags it.

BOTH peace and war are noble or ignoble, according to their kind and occasion. No man has a profounder sense of the horror and guilt of ignoble war than I have. But peace may be sought in two ways; you may either win your peace or buy it—win it by resistance to evil—buy it by compromise with evil.

WEDDINGS AND WEDDING-RINGS.

JOINING the right hands in the wedding ceremony was customary in Assyria and Persia, and the bridal veil was worn in Greece and Rome.

The Bible does not mention wedding-rings, but it describes the giving of them as pledges of honour and affection. Pharaoh gave Joseph a ring when he set him over the land of Egypt, and the prodigal was given a ring upon his return to his father. Legends relate that Joseph espoused Mary with a ring in which was set an amethyst, and of course this precious relic was found (by a miracle), and performed many valuable cures for the benefit of all mankind, and the treasury of the church.

The young Roman sent to the maiden his family had selected to become his wife, a ring in token of his fidelity. Gold was the usual material, but in the times of Pliny iron rings, set with adamant, were used to denote the durability of the contract.

This ring was worn on the fourth finger of the left hand. It was not always plain, but often bore a device, as a key to denote the authority and responsibility of a wife in her husband's house.

The diamond was much esteemed as a wedding-ring in Italy during the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, for that gem was believed to have a mysterious power of maintaining happiness between husband and wife. Silver rings, inlaid with Niello, were also much used.

Gemmed rings were in fashion forty or fifty years ago. Two, and sometimes three and four delicate rings were hinged or linked together, and bore up on the top, when closed, clasped hands, or a heart, emblems of love and fidelity. Mottoes or posies were engraved on the inside of these rings. One of the prettiest was: "Endless and pure be our love."

The Anglo-Saxons used these gemmed rings, and they in turn borrowed them of the French. One would be glad now from whom the French borrowed them, but history is silent on this point.

The wedding-ring has been worn upon the thumb and upon the right hand. The women of all nations have been as busy as bees, and with spinning and weaving to occupy their fingers it is easy to see why even a princess should put her prized wedding-ring upon the hand and the finger which would keep it the safest.

HOW TO LEARN SKATING.—Practice is the chief essential. Learn first to walk firmly and readily across a carpeted room upon your skates. Then try the oilcloth in the hall, not skating over it, but simply acquiring the ability of walking upon an even balance. All this brings the ankle, which is the source of weakness to young skaters, up to its work. On the ice, walk also before you run, or rather, skate. Refuse the assistance of your friends who would tow you about by holding your hands. This is a hint which some ladies will consider cruel; but if they really wish to skate, they must, at least in the earlier stages, send the officious cavaliers to the right about. After a little practice of standing upright and making short steps on the slippery ice, the rudimentary movements of striking out with confidence and grace will come naturally. As to skates, no one who can afford the iron or steel instrument that requires no screwing into the heel, and no straps to give pain to the foot, will use any other. Should we have anything like a fair amount of frost, there will no doubt be as much rivalry among the manufacturers as among sewing-machine makers. So you may pay your money and take your choice. Having acquired your metal skates, however, do not fail to keep them in order; afford them no chance of getting rusty. And let young ladies, especially after achieving a glow of warmth by this wholesome pastime, guard against exposure to sudden chill. Moreover, wear fairly thick boots without elastic sides.

WANTED AN HEIRESS.

CHAPTER XX.

Sir Algernon's death brought the Cavendishes and all the other members of the deceased baronet's family down in full force to be present at the funeral and the subsequent reading of the will.

They loudly lamented the sudden death of their dear kinsman; they were extremely suspicious of each other, and they only agreed in cordially hating Arthur Joscelynn, and wondering what business he had to be there at all.

The fact of his having been the first to arrive at Camoys Hall served in their eyes to aggravate the frightful presumption which they attributed to him. They made it so warm for the young man that, but for the private information previously received from Mr. Vellum and Amos Jordan, he would have left the Hall at once, rather than endure the unfriendly looks and words constantly directed against him.

Aware that the tables would shortly be turned in his favour, however, he stayed on, ignoring the innuendoes and other tokens of envy, hatred, and malice freely lavished upon him by his amiable relatives.

Rage smouldered, and hope flourished till after the reading of the will by Mr. Vellum. When that event took place in the great dining-room a scene of excitement ensued upon which the family portraits looked down in dignified astonishment.

That Arthur Joscelynn should come into the possession of Camoys Hall, with the land and moneys pertaining thereto, as well as the large sum—the hoardings of many years—profitably invested by the late baronet, seemed to the other members of his family a monstrous piece of injustice.

Joscelynn, the spendthrift, the scapegrace, to be thus enriched and promoted at the expense of all the virtuous, highly-deserving relatives who had left no stone unturned in their individual efforts to stand first in the baronet's favour!

It was shameful! unnatural! Anger blew the bellows of the family organ, which had never been played to such a lively tune before, the indignation stop being drawn out to its full extent, and indulged in with variations, by all present, excepting the fortunate Arthur.

Mrs. Hartley Cavendish, a small, fair, sharp-featured woman, gave it as her opinion that undue influence had been brought to bear upon the baronet by his nephew. Of course, with a scornful laugh, they had all heard of the supposed burglary, and of the part Mr. Joscelynn had taken in securing the burglars. Might not the whole affair have been pre-arranged to create a profound impression upon Sir Algernon, and to give him, poor, feeble old man, a high opinion of his nephew's courage and devotion?

Such things had been done before, and might be done again, with a great deal more to the same purpose.

The conjecture was so palpably absurd and far-fetched that Arthur could afford to smile at it, although it annoyed him. Mrs. Hartley Cavendish then proceeded to doubt the sanity of the late baronet, and to hint that, if Joscelynn wished to avoid litigation, he would consent to a fair distribution of the property.

Aware that, from a legal point of view, the entire family had not a leg to stand upon, he respectively declined to act upon this suggestion, while he repeated to scornful, unbelieving listeners the words spoken by Sir Algernon with reference to the ultimate disposal of his property, and enlarged upon the surprise which he, Arthur, had experienced, on finding himself in possession of the same, contrary to all his expectations.

It really was annoying for the others, their own small incongruous legacies bequeathed to them by the caustic old man in a spirit of

irony—only serving to arouse angry feelings within their breasts.

To a fox-hunting, sporting squire, who never read anything beyond *Bell's Life*, Sir Algernon had left, as a gift to remember him by, a complete set of classical works in the original Greek and Latin, with marginal notes and references. To an ascetic maiden cousin, who professed total abstinence, went half the wine-cellar; while, crowning insult! the baronet had bestowed his seedy wardrobe and some antiquated articles of jewellery upon Montagu Cavendish, a dandy of the first water.

"You must make some allowance for disappointed expectations, sir," remarked Mr. Vellum, a large, sleek, well-dressed, well-fed man, as the carriage containing the last batch of angry relatives disappeared down the avenue, much to the delight of Amos Jordan. "It can hardly be pleasant to find yourself out off with a shilling, or worse still, with something that is no earthly use to you. Gad! I thought I should have broken down altogether, and forfeited my professional gravity, as I saw their faces gradually lengthening. I wonder what use the sporting man will make of his classics? He pitched them into the carriage with a sad want of respect for the lamented donor."

Arthur laughed.

"I can afford to be good-natured, and to pardon any little display of temper on the part of my relatives since I am on the winning side," he rejoined civilly. "Had they treated me civilly I might have done something for them. As it is, they may put up with what they have got, and my forgiveness thrown in gratis."

"Ha, ha! very good, quite as much as they actually merit," laughed the lawyer, stroking his glossy black whiskers with his plump white hand. Then, remembering the solemnity of the occasion, he made an unsuccessful attempt to look serious and reflective.

"Sir Algernon was keen, very keen," he continued. "He preserved his faculties unclouded to the last. When he summed his family up to me, with one exception as an interested legacy-hunting crew, he was not far off from the truth."

"How much should you think, taking it all round, and allowing for extensive repairs and alterations, the estate will bring me in yearly?" asked Joscelynn.

"At a rough total, I should say twenty thousand pounds," replied Vellum. "The interest upon the money invested in foreign consols will bring it up to about twenty-five thousand. Enough to keep a contented man in bread-and-cheese and tobacco."

Arthur Joscelynn gave vent to an involuntary groan, and the solicitor eyed him curiously, unaware of the impatient regret to which his words had given rise.

At least, with all this money at his command, he would make one desperate effort to obtain his freedom, and to marry the woman he loved. Not without a struggle would he give in and consent to share his life with Gwendoline Massey, since her fortune was no longer an object to him.

"I suppose, until the legal formalities are settled, I shall not be able to avail myself of my newly-acquired wealth?" he remarked, carelessly, as if it were a matter of little moment to him.

"Well, no, but until then I shall be happy to oblige you," said the other, "I can accommodate you with any sum you like to name."

Arthur, being thus invited, did name a sum running into four figures. Mr. Vellum wrote out a cheque for the same without evincing any surprise at the largeness of the demand. It was not his business to inquire into the private requirements or pecuniary liabilities of a very good client. There was ample security for the money advanced, and beyond this he did not care to trouble himself.

Arthur Joscelynn stayed at Camoys Hall for several days after the funeral, ingratiating himself with his new tenants, looking over the estate, and sketching out plans for its

improvement, with an energy, an earnestness of purpose, that surprised no one more than himself.

As a penniless, happy-go-lucky adventurer, acting a part, and trusting to a rich marriage to redeem his shattered fortunes, he had been troubled by no sense of responsibility. Wealth had brought this in its train, however, rendering him anxious to fill his new position in a creditable manner, and to shine as a respectable member of society.

After giving some general instructions to the land-steward, and deferring the work to be carried on during his absence, Arthur Joscelynn left for town.

He did not go to Twickenham like an ardent lover, to report his return to his betrothed. He had written to Gwendoline once or twice while at Camoys Hall, it is true; but the letters had been cautiously worded, conveying no intimation of wealth inherited—rather serving to give any one reading them the impression that the estate was worthless and enumbered.

He had been unable to arrive at a decision as to the course he should pursue in striving to break off the engagement. At the same time he felt that it would hardly further his purpose to let the Masseys know how rich he had become.

A few hours after his return, by an early train, he made his way to Paul Welford's office in the city.

Paul was a clever fellow, a very clever fellow. When other men had to go the whole length of the street, as it were, to reach their destination, Paul always knew of a short cut that would take you there in half the time. Paul had helped him into this engagement, and since it was no longer desirable, or needful, Paul might be able to help him out of it—for a consideration.

The business transacted by Paul in the little den he called his office was of a very mixed nature. Welford and Co. was painted up over the door, but the Co., unless represented by the office boy, could only be regarded in the light of an amiable fiction.

Paul advanced money at thirty per cent., was agent for several fire and life insurance companies, collected rents, made a book, and did a great deal of lucrative though somewhat hazy and unspecified business.

When Arthur Joscelynn in his well-made mourning attire entered the office Paul greeted him with just a shade more respect than usual—just enough to show that he acknowledged the favourable change in his circumstances, and was well posted up in the matter.

"Glad to see you again," he remarked, handing his visitor a chair. "Permit me to congratulate you on the increase of fortune that must go a long way towards reconciling you to the death of your uncle, the baronet. I know a prize worth having would fall to your share, one day; that you wouldn't go on drawing blanks in life's lottery, Joscelynn, and I have proved a true prophet."

"The estate is not worth half as much as you imagine," grumbled Joscelynn, already impregnated with the miserly desire to plead poverty peculiar to wealth. "I can pay off the money I owe you, though in two instalments. It will be quite a new sensation to feel that I am out of debt."

"I am in no hurry for the money," replied Welford assuringly. He knew it was safe, while he would have told a very different tale to some poor little shopkeeper, worried and anxious, whose bill had fallen due. "The bargain was that I should wait until after your marriage, and I am quite willing to do so. Then we will have a general settling up of affairs if you like?"

"My marriage is the subject I have come here to discuss with you," said Joscelynn, with suppressed eagerness, and no little embarrassment. "Welford, I wish, if possible to prevent its ever taking place. I—I have changed my mind concerning it. Miss Massey is not the lady I should care to see reigning

at Camoys Hall as my wife. She is very lovely, very charming; but if I could back out of my engagement with her, without losing my character as a man of honour, I should be glad to do so. Cannot you suggest some plan likely to bring about the desired result?"

Paul Welford opened his large, dark, inscrutable eyes, that had gained for him the cognomen of Mephistopheles among his intimate friends, to their utmost extent.

"If you remember, your marriage formed part of our compact," he replied, bluntly, "I have been advancing money to you all this time that you might keep up appearances and secure the heiress."

"You are thinking of your money alone, man!" related Joscellyn impatiently. "I tell you that is safe enough. You shall have it all, not only the sum advanced, but the additional one, promised to you in the event of my marriage with Miss Massey taking place through your connivance. Help me to regain my freedom, and you shall not be a loser by it. As a proof of this, I am about to reduce my debt by one-half."

He threw a little roll of notes on the table as he spoke, and Paul Welford eyed them lovingly.

You shall have a thousand over and above the sum originally promised and agreed upon," he continued, hurriedly, "if you can only devise some means to free me from this cursed engagement."

Paul Welford, quite reconciled by this time to the changed views of his client, quite willing to help him in carrying them out, bit his fingers thoughtfully.

"You wouldn't like to cut the Gordian knot by acquainting Miss Massey with the deception practised upon her from the beginning by you?" he said, inquiringly, "putting it to her as a matter of conscience that you couldn't possibly keep her from any longer."

"I shouldn't, indeed," replied Joscellyn, vigorously. "Consider the position I occupy now, and the probable effects of such a disclosure! Freedom gained at the expense of society's good opinion would be far too dear."

"You might, without revealing any ugly facts, plead a previous love affair, and throw yourself upon her mercy," continued Welford. "In that case pride would, in all probability, induce her to give you your congé."

Joscellyn shook his head.

"In that case I should be telling her the truth," he replied, nervously. "I have been in love with another woman all the way through. It would be as dangerous to acquaint her with that fact, though, as to reveal to her the deceit that represented me to her father and herself as a rich man instead of a poor one at the commencement of our acquaintance. Either confession would reflect upon me unfavourably as a man of honour, and lower me in the eyes of society when once it became known. If—"

"Egad, I've got it!" cried Welford, triumphantly. "A splendid thing in ideas! original enough to insure the success of a new play if carefully worked out."

"Speak out, then, and tell me what you have hit upon," said Joscellyn, testily.

"Just this; you played the part of a rich man when you hadn't got a penny, that you might win the heiress with her father's full consent. Why not reverse the characters, since your altered circumstances render the engagement distasteful to you, and plead poverty instead? You ought to be a good actor by this time, able to undertake any role without fear of failure."

The sneer conveyed in the words was too palpable to be pleasant. Joscellyn, alive to the degrading nature of the position in which he had placed himself, writhed under it without being to retaliate.

"It would be a bold stroke to venture upon," he replied, dubiously, "and the odds would be greatly against its proving a success. We have to deal with a keen man of business in Percival Massey. I should have to be very

explicit in my statements to him if I wished to avoid rousing his suspicions."

"Tell him the estate is heavily mortgaged, that you have put your name to a bill, that you have speculated unsuccessfully," cried Paul Welford. "There are a hundred different ways of doing it, and imparting to it a semblance of truth. Here am I, ready to come forward in any capacity to declare that you owe me something less than half a million, if necessary. Do you suppose that Percival Massey, if once he could be brought to regard you in the light of a ruined man, would still be willing to accept you as his son-in-law, even with the marriage so close at hand? Not he! There would be polite regrets from the father, tears and an affectionate parting from the daughter, and you would be free to follow your own fancy in the choice of a wife."

Joscellyn, knowing more of Gwendoline Massey's intense love for him, was hardly so sanguine of success. Nevertheless the idea was not a bad one, and, for want of a better, he resolved to adopt it.

There was the hope that Percival Massey might bring parental authority to bear upon his daughter, compelling her to accept her release from an engagement no longer desirable.

"I shall think over your suggestion," he rejoined, "and if I deem it feasible I may act upon it. There is no time to be lost. Should I succeed, my desire to release Miss Massey from her engagement would apparently have its rise in disinterested generosity and honourable scruples, attendant upon my loss of fortune. It would also spare me any unnecessary pain. I should be sorry, extremely sorry, to inflict more suffering upon her than the occasion really calls for, or to wound her feelings by permitting her to become acquainted with the fact that her love has never met with a return."

This delicate consideration on Joscellyn's part, coupled with the mean, dishonourable policy he evidently intended to adopt towards the poor girl, amused Paul Welford immensely.

"What a pitiful humbug it is!" reflected the money-lender, after wishing his visitor a polite good-morning. "He would actually keep the mask on to deceive himself as to the dastardly motives that influence his conduct, if such a thing were possible. Paul, my boy, you are clever, and cunning, and fairly unscrupulous; but if, like your client, you had only enjoyed the privilege of belonging to an old family, to what heights of superlative rascality and high-born scoundrelism might you not eventually have attained!"

CHAPTER XXI.

The wintry sunlight shone on Percival Massey walking to and fro the terrace in front of the Laurels, while below him ran the river, bearing its dark secrets to the bosom of the great ocean, sparkling and gleaming as if no sinful, sorrowful man or woman had ever disappeared from sight beneath its cold, rapid waters.

The financier was ill at ease, and his mental disquiet reflected itself in his pale, wan, high-bred face.

Owing to Sir Algernon's death Gwendoline's marriage could not well take place that year. Standing as he did on the verge of detection and ruin, unable to confide in the promised secrecy of his old accomplice, Sandy Macnab, the delay occasioned him deep anxiety. If he could but see his idolised child well settled in life and amply provided for, the fear and suspense that rendered his existence a burden to him would then be partially allayed. But delay made him tremble lest after all some damning disclosure should take place while there was yet time for Arthur Joscellyn to avoid an alliance with the daughter of a notorious thief and forger.

The haggard, brooding look vanished with marvellous celerity from his face as Arthur Joscellyn came along the terrace to meet

him. Since so much depended upon the young man he must not be allowed to think that anything was amiss.

The mutually deceived and deceiving pair shook hands with each other, this being the first time they had met since Arthur's return from his uncle's funeral.

"So you have got over your mournful errand, Arthur," observed Percival Massey, in a cordial tone. "Poor Sir Algernon's bark proved worse than his bite. He has made you a landed proprietor instead of disinheriting you, according to promise."

"Yes," returned Joscellyn, nervously, "but the estate is terribly encumbered. It will be a stone round my neck for years to come. You would scarcely credit the condition it has been allowed to lapse into unless you were to see it. How is Gwendie?"

"She is quite well. We were speaking of you only a few minutes ago, and wondering if we should see you to-day. You will find her in the drawing-room."

But Joscellyn lingered, dreading the ordeal before him, while anxious to get it over.

"The wedding must be postponed for a few months, I suppose," said the financier, somewhat surprised that Arthur did not immediately go indoors to join Gwendoline. "It could hardly take place so soon after the baronet's death."

"No, of course not; it wouldn't be the correct thing!" stammered Joscellyn, whose cool assurance and power of lying without an effort seemed suddenly to have deserted him.

There had been no sense of social responsibility, no distant hope of gaining Ethel to unnerve and agitate him on the previous occasions, many in number, when he had successfully duped and deceived Percival Massey.

"I've some very unpleasant news to acquaint you with before going in to see Gwendoline," he continued, abruptly. "Perhaps, when you know all, you may refuse to let us meet again as engaged lovers. Circumstances have been dead against me lately, Mr. Massey, and I am virtually a ruined man."

Was it the effect of a passing cloud, or did a grey, awful shadow creep over the financier's face on hearing this?

"Ruined!" he ejaculated, hoarsely. "Are you in earnest?"

"Yes."

"Good heavens! Why have you kept such an important fact a secret from me until now?"

"I hoped that events would take a favourable turn, and render such a proceeding unnecessary," explained Joscellyn, gathering courage in proportion as the other man lost it. "Last year I was induced by a friend to accept a bill for a large amount. He bolted, leaving me to meet the bill as best I might, and to pay the exorbitant interest. Then I speculated, in the attempt to reclaim my loss, to find that I was merely throwing good money after bad. Not once did my ventures meet with success. They have reduced my yearly income to a few hundreds, upon which I shall have to subsist for the future."

Percival Massey regarded him keenly and suspiciously as he spoke. His confusion and embarrassment, however, gave a genuine appearance to the story he told, representing him in the light of a generous, thoughtless fellow, ignorant of money-matters, who had been cruelly fleeced and taken in.

"You have still the estate recently left to you by your uncle?" remarked the financier, after taking a long look at the river flowing swiftly and silently below.

"Yes, such as it is. Years must elapse before I can turn it to any account, or render it profitable."

"And those marriage settlements—"

"Are so much waste paper now," replied Joscellyn. He might, in all truthfulness, have added that they had been nothing but waste paper right throughout the piece.

"Come indoors, and let us discuss this painful business in my study," said Percival

Massey, with a shudder. "It is cold out here, and the fog is sweeping up from the river."

They went in so quietly that Gwendoline failed to hear them.

"Why didn't you come to me when things were going wrong with you?" inquired her father, angrily, throwing himself into his easy chair. "With my experience of finance and loaning I might have helped you, and prevented you from squandering your money upon false friends and rascally brokers. Under my supervision you might have speculated successfully."

"When a man has made a fool of himself he doesn't care to let everybody else know it," replied Joscelyn. "It is only quite recently that I have acknowledged my failure to myself, and consented to look it boldly in the face."

"You must be prepared to hear that your unfortunate losses will affect the attitude in which you at present stand to my daughter as her affianced husband," continued Percival Massey, coldly. "I should not have given my consent to your engagement had I not understood you to be possessed of considerable means."

Arthur Joscelyn bowed submissively. For him the conversation was taking an agreeable turn. If the other could only have known how wildly his heart was beating in the hope of coming freedom!

"I am willing to release Miss Massey from her promise to marry me, if you insist upon it," he replied with an air of sorrowful resignation. "It is the least I can do under the circumstances, irrespective of my own great loss. I should not be justified in asking her to share my poverty."

Again Percival Massey subjected him to a searching, suspicious glance; again he fell a victim to Joscelyn's clever duplicity.

His grief, his losses, his generous offer to withdraw any claim he might possess upon Gwendoline's affection, resembled truth so closely that even the astute, wary man of the world was taken in.

He felt sorry for Joscelyn, and a little ashamed of having spoken so frankly to him in his anger and disappointment.

Proud and ambitious, he revolted against the idea of permitting his only daughter to marry an impoverished man. He had conceded a great deal in sanctioning the engagement, since Joscelyn had so little to bestow upon her. Now the latter's broken fortunes rendered him altogether ineligible.

"I can appreciate your high-principled offer and the self-sacrifice it involves," said Percival Massey, in a more friendly tone, "even while I feel bound to avail myself of it on Gwendoline's behalf. Reared in luxury she would hardly be in her right sphere as a poor man's wife. You must part, and yet, while it is my painful duty to tell you this, I trust that you will not misconstrue my motives, or dream me mercenary and time-serving. If, in return, I can help you in any way, I shall be most happy to do so."

"You are very kind," rejoined Joscelyn, with unconscious irony. "If I ever stand in need of assistance I shall remember your offer. Do you think it will be wise for me to see Gwendoline till you have broken the news to her?"

"Perhaps not," said the financier, doubtfully. "I hardly know how she will take it. I expect it will be a difficult matter to reconcile her to the sensible decision that you and I have arrived at. Poor child, I would fain have spared her this sorrow! The fact of her marriage preparations being so far advanced will render it doubly bitter."

"If you would like me to go abroad for a while," murmured Joscelyn, "till we have got over the first sharp pang of separation, and are able to meet each other calmly, I—"

A light footstep sounded along the corridor, and Gwendoline's fresh young voice, talking to the St. Bernard, made itself heard.

The two men regarded each other in mutual discomfiture.

"She is coming here!" ejaculated Percival Massey, nervously, afraid for the first time to encounter his child and tell her what he had done.

"Papa! Archie!" exclaimed Gwendoline, on entering the study in search of her father. "Why I did not know"—turning to her lover—"that you were back, much less that you were in the house."

"I only returned yesterday," explained Arthur Joscelyn, horribly afraid lest Gwendoline's undesired presence should render the part he had to play a very difficult one.

Glancing quickly from one perturbed face to the other the girl cried out in sudden alarm,—

"What is the matter? Why do you look at me so strangely? Something bad has happened, and you are trying to keep it from me."

Her father drew her gently towards him, away from her false lover, and placed his arm round her caressingly.

"My darling, I could wish that you had not interrupted us at such a moment," he said, regretfully. "I could have explained matters to you later on with less difficulty. Since you are here you may as well learn the worst at once, and I trust that your good sense and the obedience you owe me will prevent you from rebelling against my wishes when they are disclosed to you. Joscelyn, the hard truth will come better from your lips, perhaps, than mine."

Thus appealed to, Arthur, in sheer desperation, scarcely conscious of what he was saying or how he said it, informed Gwendoline of his imaginary losses, touched briefly upon the unremunerative nature of his recently inherited estate, and hinted—for the life of him he dared not do more than hint—at the consequent breaking-off of their engagement to which he had already agreed.

Not once did he venture to meet her eyes as he told his lying tale. His own were cast upon the ground, while his faltering voice, to her, spoke only of a heart full to breaking.

Gwendoline, her fair delicate beauty enhanced by the dark dress, the sombre trailing draperies she had assumed on hearing of Sir Algernon's death, regarded him incredulously.

"Are you both mad?" she cried, as he finished speaking. "Papa, Archie, do you imagine that I am to be disposed of in this way without my own consent, that my happiness depends entirely upon the gold you may possess? Dear, though you may have lost all besides, one poor treasure is still yours—my fondest, truest love! Oh, Archie, Archie! you should have known me too well by this time to form such a low opinion of my fidelity!"

Her arm was round his neck, her tears flowing fast, while her disengaged hand rested upon her father's breast in timid pleading.

"I am sorry to hear of your losses," she continued, "but they must not be permitted to come between us. You proved the disinterested nature of your love for me, Archie, when as a rich man you won my heart. Now it is my glad privilege to show how little importance I attached to your wealth by remaining constant to you in poverty. Whatever your lot in life may be I am willing to share it with you to the last day of mine. Poverty, with love to redeem it, cannot be such a terrible thing. Is it necessary for me to remind you that you have pledged yourself to marry, not a senseless doll, but a loving, trusting woman, capable of sharing the trials as well as the triumphs that may befall her husband?"

How her love, and innocence, and devotion fought against his cunning and deceit, turning his own weapons against him, winning a victory in profound unconsciousness!

"Gwenie, this is not bowing to my decision," said her father, reprovingly. "I really cannot permit your engagement to go on, and Mr. Joscelyn is aware of it."

"It must go on, papa," she replied, gently but firmly.

"Must!"

"Yes, unless you wish to ruin my life, and destroy my happiness for the sake of money, that I do not even require. Surely you, the best and kindest of fathers, will not insist upon such a cruel, useless sacrifice. I know you will not! Archie, speak to him, tell him how dearly we love each other, how much depends upon his consent or refusal! My love for you is not the passing fancy of a girl, but the strong affection that ceases only with death. Can it be crossed or set aside with impunity?"

Arthur Joscelyn glanced appealingly towards Percival Massey, devoutly hoping that he would refuse to alter his decision.

But the financier's iron will became mere wax when his only child was in question. His better judgment was not proof against her tears and entreaties.

"You must settle it between yourselves," he said, with an air of resignation. "It is not as I could have wished, but I cannot go against her in anything likely to affect the happiness of a lifetime."

Gwendoline threw herself on her knees beside him, and drawing down his stately grey head kissed him again and again in thankfulness and gratitude.

"He is not such a grim, terrible papa, after all, Archie!" she exclaimed, tears and smiles forming a kind of April sunshine on her face. "He will help us when we are married, and your fortune will come back to you by degrees, I am certain. We must nurse that poor rickety estate till it becomes strong and hearty, able to reward us for our pains. And you will never doubt my love, or speak of parting from me again?"

It was all over; her pure transparent nature had outwitted his most determined effort to obtain his release by unfair means. Instead of being broken, his fetters were riveted upon him more firmly than ever.

To inflict a death-wound upon her loving heart by openly proclaiming himself liar and scoundrel, exposing the deceit he had practised upon her from the first, causing her to shrink from him in horror and loathing, yet remained to him. He lacked the courage, or the brutality, however, to avail himself of these extreme means.

Rather than descend to such depths he would make her his wife, and thus save his credit and his good name in the eyes of society.

"Booked! hopelessly booked!" was the mental soliloquy in which he indulged on leaving the Laurels that evening at an early hour. "The only thing gained is a brief postponement of the wedding, which I owe to Sir Algernon's death. But a respite is not a reprieve, unfortunately, and my sentence is sure to be duly carried out."

CHAPTER XXII.

Troubles seldom come alone. This is a trite saying, but a very true one; one that we fail to relish when some Job's comforter repeats it for our personal benefit in time of affliction.

Gwendoline had scarcely recovered from the pain and bewilderment caused by Arthur Joscelyn's false statement, his assumed poverty, and fictitious embarrassments, which for her bore the stamp of truth, when a less important but very unwelcome incident rose up to confront her.

Birdie, the demure, old-fashioned, bright-eyed child, that everyone loved and petted, was suddenly claimed by her remaining relatives, and taken away from Gwendoline's protecting care.

Oddly enough, those relatives proved to be none other than Richard and Vincent Eyre.

Birdie's tiny hands were destined to draw yet closer the fine invisible threads of vital interest existing between Percival Massey and the two men he most dreaded on earth. She was the unconscious means of their once more crossing each other's path in life.

The Eyres had had but one sister, a beautiful, wilful girl, who, upon the death of their father, had been adopted by a maiden aunt.

Impatient of all wise control at the age of eighteen, Beryl Eyre had left the shelter of the aunt's roof, and formed a runaway match with the dissipated son of a gentleman farmer, whose advances her aunt had very properly repulsed on her behalf.

Beryl's foolish conduct in this matter had annoyed her brothers sadly at the time. Aware of the unenviable character of the man she had married they endeavoured to ascertain her subsequent fate.

But in vain. Beryl had left England with her husband, and no tidings of the lovely defiant sister, with whom, even as boys, they had held so little intercourse, reached the brothers for several years.

By degrees they had renounced all hope of ever seeing or even hearing from her again, deeming that her proud nature would prevent her from acquainting them with any misery she might be enduring in the shape of poverty or actual ill-treatment.

Then a friend of Beryl, with whom she had kept up an irregular correspondence for some time after her ill-starred marriage, wrote to the Eyres, to whom she was personally unknown, asking them what had become of Beryl's child after its parents' death, and offering to adopt it as her own.

Surprised and grieved, Vincent Eyre immediately wrote back asking for more information, acknowledging his entire ignorance with regard to his sister's fate, and the existence of a child.

Mrs. Verney, the friend in question, willingly told him what little she knew, viz., that Beryl had gone with her husband to Jamaica, where both had taken the fever and died, leaving a female child, which she supposed had been sent back to England to be under the care of its uncles. Since they knew nothing of it what could possibly have become of the poor little waif?

Richard and Vincent were not men to let the grass grow under their feet, or to rest until they had succeeded in tracing Beryl's child.

Her untimely death was a painful fact to be thus suddenly brought home to them, but it was far more painful to think of her child—their own kith and kin—eating the bread of charity under a stranger's roof.

They instituted inquiries in Jamaica through the medium of a resident solicitor. The few principal facts speedily transpired. After the death of the parents in very poor circumstances the little girl had been entrusted to a kindly sea-captain, who promised to restore her to her friends in England.

The vessel had been wrecked on its homeward voyage, however, the captain had gone down, and in all probability the child had shared his fate. With no one expecting her arrival in England, no one to care for her in the whole world, she had quickly been forgotten.

Richard and Vincent took up the thread of evidence at this point, and diligently worked it themselves. A vessel bearing the same name as the one in which the child had been shipped had broken up on the south coast near a place called Shingleton, more than a year ago; this much they gleaned from an official list of wrecks, and to Shingleton went Richard Eyre, having more time at his disposal than Vincent, to make fresh inquiries.

He had no difficulty to contend with, no sluggish memories to rouse. The fact of the shipwreck was still comparatively recent in the minds of the Shingletons. Yes, there was a little 'un, to be sure, a rare pretty girl brought ashore in the lifeboat. Was she still in Shingleton? No, a lady staying there at the time of the wreck had taken the child away with her. They lodged with Mrs. Linnet, Marine-terrace; possibly she might be acquainted with the present address of the benevolent lady and her little protégée.

Mrs. Linnet, voluble of tongue, eager to

oblige, supplied Richard Eyre with a great many unasked for details, and what he most wanted—the address of the man whose daughter had adopted Beryl's child.

Percival Massey, deep in abstruse calculations, pondering the advisability of advancing a fresh loan to a needy foreign power, experienced a sickly, indescribable sensation of detected crime, fear, hatred, and defiance, when Richard Eyre's card was handed to him by the footman, Richard Eyre himself having been shown into the drawing-room, where he awaited the arrival of the master of the house.

"That drunken fool Sandy Macnab has betrayed me," was the first thought that darted through the financier's mind, as he went with set white face and faltering steps to meet the son of the man whom he had so foully wronged.

"Will the Eyres agree to any compromise, or are they bent upon my public ruin and disgrace? For Gwendoline's sake I will throw myself upon their mercy. If gold can stifle vengeance or buy forbearance I am not without a powerful ally. Better, far better, to offer them the half of my substance than to die a felon, disgraced and detected at the end of so many years of clever, successful scheming."

When Richard Eyre, betraying no sign of recognition, no mark of hostility, calmly announced his reason for seeking an interview with the financier, and explained the relation in which he stood to the child rescued from the wreck, the revulsion of feeling, the intense relief that swept over Percival Massey well-nigh undermined his icy, habitual self-conceit.

Sandy had not betrayed him then. The Eyres knew him only as Percival Massey, the financier, whose daughter had kindly provided for the child of their deceased sister. He turned to ring the bell that he might conceal his face from Richard's gaze for a moment, and recover his composure.

Strange weavings of Fate's web that he could only contemplate in helpless wonder! That the grandchild of the man whose fortune he had sunk in order to realise his own floating capital should thus have found shelter and protection under his roof, afforded him some faint gleam of satisfaction. Unconsciously he had done a little towards atoning for his sin in the past.

(To be continued.)

HOW THEY VOTE IN GERMANY.—A striking feature of the German municipal system is its entire independence of national politics. No issue but those arising out of municipal questions are allowed to influence the city elections. Every male inhabitant twenty-four years of age has a right to vote on municipal questions provided that he has his own household and is not dependent upon father or mother; that he has not received alms from the public funds within twelve years; that he has paid all municipal dues; that he occupies a house or pursues a trade with two employes; that he pays an income tax or a class tax. Under one or another of these five conditions all industrious persons in the city are included. That all votes should count equally is regarded as unbusiness-like. The arrangement adopted to meet this point of view is this: Voters are divided into three classes, each of which elect one-third of the city council. To the first class are assigned so many of the largest taxpayers as pay one-third of the taxes assessed; to the second so many as in the aggregate pay the second third of the taxes; to the third class belong all not included in the first and second. Each of the three classes elects forty-two members of the council, its influence upon questions of finance being kept in strict equality with its tax payments. The city council of Berlin has long been conspicuous for the educational and financial standing of its members. Election to it is accounted an honour to which the ablest men of the city aspire.

A NORTH-WESTER.

The wind from the North-west came over the hills,

Came over the hills with a shout and a song,

Driving the East-wind before him along,
Laughing and bounding over the hills.

In the glorious pride of his beauty and strength,

Shaking back the bright, far-streaming locks of his hair;

And the clouds from the East fled away in despair,

In terror, beholding his beauty and strength.

He ruffled the waters with turbulent breath,
He shook from the roses the rain-drops away,

Then over the meadows swept recklessly gay;
All the flowers in the meadows were stirred by his breath.

O'er the heights—forest-crowned—he triumphantly swept,
And the pines and the oak-trees at sound of his voice

Lifted up their proud heads and began to rejoice,
As through the dark forest, triumphant, he swept.

All the waters reflected the light of his eyes,
All nature looked up with a smile as he passed,

Till the few scattered cloudlets that lingered at last
Blushed red at the glance of his beautiful eyes.

A. M. E.

HAD WE NEVER LOVED SO BLINDLY.

CHAPTER VII.

FLORA TREVANION hurried out of the room, not knowing in the least where she would find the others. She passed numbers of men lounging about the corridors, who all looked at her with interest, most of them resolving to ask for an introduction before the evening was over.

Shy but eager she ran up the stairs, waiting for an instant to lean over the balustrade which ran round the gallery at the top, and watch the animated scene below.

One man, with a dark, keen face, caught sight of the graceful figure, and fixed his eyes upon it with open, almost insolent, admiration, till becoming aware of it suddenly, she drew back like a frightened rabbit, and hurried towards the bedrooms.

Mrs. Madden met her, looking thoroughly puzzled and bewildered, and taking her under her motherly wing, opened one door after another till she found the room in which the Miss Willoughbys were smoothing out their tresses for the further enchantment of their future partners.

"Oh, here you are!" cried Jenny, in delight, as she stood before the looking-glass eyeing her own buxom figure with evident satisfaction. "I positively can't raise my hands to my head without cracking my sleeves, and I've been dying to put my flowers in," holding out a spray of pink geranium and maidenhair fern, and dancing with impatience on the tips of her toes.

Flora took the flowers, and inserted them carefully amongst the fluffy curls, which, as Miss Jane Willoughby thought, showed off her beauty to the best advantage.

She bobbed her head right and left just like a sparrow, wondering if they weren't just one little bit too high, or, perhaps, rather too

much to the left, till Emily told her sharply that she couldn't wait for ever, and she wanted Flora to see after her.

Miss Trevanion opened her eyes when Emily put a tiger-lily into her hand and requested her to adjust it.

"But isn't it too large?" her eyes twinkling with amusement, as she contemplated the flower in amazement.

"No, Edgar Winder says that nothing can be too monstrous. He was at a ball in London only the other day, and he saw a lady with a water-lily on the top of her head nearly as big as a soup-plate."

"That decides it, of course," the corners of her mouth twitching. "Mr. Winder's taste is beyond suspicion."

Emily looked cross.

"You always sneer at the poor fellow, because you can't get over his not admiring you. I think he is one of the pleasantest people here."

"I suppose so, as you talked to him the whole afternoon. Do you really think you can wear it?" trying to pin it down so that it should nestle as much as possible.

"Of course I can. It looks uncommon, just as he said it would," turning and twisting as her sister had done before her. "He wanted me to look different to the rest, said he was tired of roses, and all that sort of thing. By-the-by, where are yours?" turning sharply upon her, as if she had been a detective ready to pounce.

Where were they? For a moment she could not recollect, but the next it flashed across her that she had left them in Sir Basil's hands, and a scorching blush rose to her cheeks.

"I—I dropped them downstairs."

"Gave them away I should say by the look of your face. Really, Flora, I don't think mamma would approve of such a thing," and Emily pursed up her mouth.

"Don't you? I didn't ask her," with a flash of her large dark eyes.

"I didn't even give a rosebud to Frank Rivers, although I am sure he hinted for it," and Jenny gathered up her fan and gloves with an air of the strictest propriety.

"And I have never given a flower in my life to anyone," throwing back her head, "and I don't suppose I ever shall. Are you ready?"

"Are you? You haven't put anything in your hair," with a depreciatory glance at the small pearl star which glistened amongst the glossy brown curls, and which Emily thought was frightfully insignificant compared with her own tiger-lily.

"No, I haven't time; and it doesn't matter. Come along."

"You are in a marvellous hurry. Pray, is Sir Basil waiting at the bottom of the stairs?"

Flora marched out of the room with her head in the air. The shaft had been sped at random, for Emily was quite unaware of the long *litté-d-tite* in the octagon room. Possibly if she had known of it she would have made the remark even stronger, but she did not guess the suffering she had inflicted on the girl's delicate organisation, and chuckled to herself at the success of her little joke, as she tripped along, calling to Jenny to keep up.

The magnificence of the place struck both the sisters with awe, and they could not help feeling Flora Trevanion as a sort of protectress, because she was accustomed to the house from having stayed there.

Mrs. Willoughby was standing with a group of ladies by the drawing-room door as the girls came through the hall. She turned round with a smile to her daughters,—

"So here you are at last! The collation is quite ready, but Sir Basil kindly said I had better gather my flock before he gave the signal for anyone to move into the dining-room."

"I quite forgot dinner!" exclaimed Flora, her face lengthening, for she had made such haste over her toilette in order to be down in time to watch over her brother whilst being moved into the drawing-room.

"Yes, my dear, to-day you forget most things," severely, in a tone that brought a bright colour in the girl's cheeks, and made Lady Rivers look surprised. "I am glad to find that youth can be forgetful as well as old age," she said, graciously, for Miss Trevanion's high-bred air pleased her fastidious taste. She at once made up her mind that the solicitor's wife tyrannised over her husband's ward, and resolved to extend her favour to a lovely girl who would be an ornament to the large lofty rooms at Riverscourt. "Allow me to make acquaintance with you, my dear. I knew your poor father better than most people, and I think he would like me to know his child."

Flora stretched out an eager hand at once, for any kind allusion to her father would have made her on friendly terms with a chimney-sweep's wife; and the Willoughbys were quite dismayed at her ease of manner when talking to a lady who was supposed to hold her head so high that she could not see those of inferior rank. Sir Basil Fane's dark eyes lit up with pleasure, as he came forward to offer his arm to Lady Rivers.

"I think we are all assembled."

A tall form hurried across the room. A fair head bent before Flora Trevanion. A familiar voice said, entreatingly,—

"May I?"

The next moment they were following in the wake of a long string of guests, for Frank Rivers was determined to leave a wide interval between his companion and his host.

"So very flattering of Sir Basil!" Mrs. Willoughby took care to explain to the portly gentleman who was taking her into dinner. "Nothing would induce him to go into the dining-room before my girls made their appearance."

"Does he know anything of them?" thinking to himself that the baronet was easily pleased, if he had already fallen a victim to the Miss Willoughbys' attractions.

"Not so very much, but then it was all the nicer of him, I suppose," lowering her voice as she paused in helping herself to some mayonnaise. "A barrister naturally feels drawn to one of his own profession."

"Ah! he'll forget all that now, forget that he ever sat in Lincoln's-inn hungry for the brief that went next door. Looks clever, though. Expect if he didn't do much it was his own fault!"

"But who says he didn't?" aghast at such an aspersion on her paragon.

The Squire chuckled.

"Ever seen his name in the paper? Ever known him to be connected with any trial that was ever heard of?"

"Well, no," she admitted, reluctantly; "but some people have a craze against their name appearing in the *Times*!"

"A barrister would be crazy if he objected!" said Mr. Thornton, drily.

"Well, you can't say that of Sir Basil!" with a triumphant smile.

"Something queer about the man," in a low voice. "Do you notice, he never laughs?"

"Perhaps he has nothing to laugh about!"

"Heaven preserve me from a long-faced fellow who has nothing on earth to laugh about!" exclaimed the Squire, energetically. "I'd avoid him as I would a pest!"

"But why?"

"Because low spirits are as catching as small-pox. Ha! ha! you look as if I had astonished you!" and his jolly face beamed with amusement.

"I really thought you meant to infer—" began Mrs. Willoughby, gravely.

"I? Nothing was further from my thoughts. I never infer anything," with a mischievous smile. "For instance, with that young Rivers before my eyes, forgetting his dinner for the sake of Trevanion's girl, I don't even infer that he's spooney. There, what do you think of that?"

"Nothing; because Mr. Rivers has known my girls from their cradles, and he has only

got friendly with Flora because she is living with us."

"Hemph! In my day we didn't wait for a reason before we went head-over-ears!" and the Squire laughed again, whilst Mrs. Willoughby looked annoyed.

CHAPTER VIII.

For all the remaining years of her life Flora Trevanion looked back on that evening of the First of June, as one of the happiest in her life. She was a girl still, with all the hopes of youth already budding in her innocent heart, with bright eyes looking forward to the joyful promises of the future. In all the sorrows of her life there had been nothing to turn into bitterness the natural sweetness of her disposition. She had lost her father and mother, and she and her brother had been left with few of this world's goods to bless themselves with; but there was no dishonour in their present poverty.

Their father was a generous, high-minded, honourable man. He had not made money by defrauding the widow and fatherless, nor had he brought anyone else down with the crash of his ruin. No stain rested on his memory, no shame was upon his children's head. They could go forth fearlessly into the world, sure that no stone would be thrown at them for any wrong-doing of their father's.

"Tell me, Miss Trevanion," and Frank Rivers lowered his voice so that his question could not be heard by the rest of the guests at the long table, "why did you give your roses to that man?"

"Why shouldn't I?" with a smile about the corners of her mouth. "That man, as you irreverently call him, is my host, and I am sure he would give me some more if he knew I hadn't got any."

"His whole gardenful, of course," huffingly.

"No, because that would leave none for other people!"

"Does he care about other people? Strikes me that he would go his own way, and give away his head if he chose, without bothering about the general public."

"I think he would do what was right, whatever other people said," thoughtfully.

"Or what was wrong, if it suited him better."

"Why do you dislike him so?"

"I never said I did," his fair face flushing.

"Just look at him now. He's as obstinate as a pig. He would go straight at a wall rather than turn to the right or left. You can see it in his face."

"Isn't that grand? Isn't it better to go straight at a thing, never mind what obstacles get in your way," her eyes looking bright and eager, like those of a young soldier making for a breach at the head of his men.

"Depends upon the thing," drily, "and your way of getting to it."

"I suppose so," with a low laugh. "If I were in the garden and wanted a cup of tea, it would be better to go round by the door than crash through one of the drawing-room windows, supposing it was shut."

"And when I'm a captain, and dying to be a major," he rejoined, with a smile, "it would be better to wait or exchange into another regiment than administer a dose of arsenic in order to get the fellow out of my way."

"Well, I suppose so, if you don't wish to join the majority by means of the gibbet," her eyes twinkling.

"Is that a joke—an execrable pun?"

"Certainly not, a wholesome warning."

"Warning not needed. I was pointing out to you the dangers of your doctrine."

"Still, I like a man with a firm will," nodding her young head resolutely.

"And a fine property?" looking down into her face, and wondering which she would prefer—the Abbey or Riverscourt.

"I should like him just as well if he were a pauper."

"Would you take him tea and tracts when lodged in the workhouse?"

"I'd take him tea and tobacco, which he would like much better."

"And trust his soul to the chaplain?"

"Certainly. Why should I preach to him, because I happened not to be quite so unfortunate?"

"Preach to me; I should like it," lips and eyes smiling together.

"I might have given you a lecture on bad temper an hour ago," with a mischievous glance from under her dark lashes.

"Certainly not," his face clouding. "It was enough to make any fellow in no end of a rage. Even Mrs. Willoughby was furious."

"She was cross and fussy because she couldn't find me," the colour deepening in her cheeks; "but you had no right to bother yourself about me."

"I didn't ask for a right," his fresh young voice vibrating, "I don't care a hang if I had it or not, but I shall bother myself about you, whether Fane likes it or not."

"You are very good," with quiet dignity, though the hot blood rushed over neck and face. "I don't see what he has to do with it."

"No more do I," eagerly. "He hasn't as much right as I. We are old friends you know," with as much pride in his tone as if he were claiming friendship with a Plantagenet.

"He saved Eustace's life; I can never forget that," her eyes softening with the remembrance, as she cast a glance towards the head of the table.

Sir Basil was talking gravely to his next-door neighbour about some troublesome tax, which had caused general discontent, but he caught the glance, and one of his rare sweet smiles flitted across his handsome face, transfiguring it like a sunset on a rugged moor.

"Curse him!" muttered Rivers, under his yellow moustaches. "I wish I had been there, and he had never set foot in this place. Mark my words, Miss Trevanion—"

But as to what she was to mark was left in doubt, for there was a general pushing back of chairs preparatory to a move into the drawing-room.

When once the conversation stopped Flora's thoughts were concentrated on her brother, and to Rivers's chagrin she dropped his arm as soon as she crossed the threshold.

Where was he? She looked right and left, but she could see him nowhere.

Plenty of eager eyes met hers, but not the pair which at present was all the world to her.

How much longer he would engross her affection was doubtful, for she had already reached the time of life when love and lovers take up the thread of existence, and brothers are generally sent to the wall.

The two sisters looked after her with disparaging glances, and their mother remarked, "Flora is so dreadfully independent!" but there was nothing forward in the girl's bearing as she threaded her way quietly through the crowd, utterly unconscious of the interest she was exciting as her lovely eyes searched in vain for Eustace Trevanion.

"What are you looking for?" asked Sir Basil, in the deep voice which always sent an unaccountable thrill through her whole being.

"Can't you guess?" she said, with a smile, somehow feeling sure that the question was unnecessary.

"Of course I can. I only asked as a matter of form. You won't find him here. He is in the ball-room. I knew he would like to watch the dancing, and one move was enough for him."

"I suppose I may go to him?" shyly.

"I suppose you may do what you like in my house," he answered, with a smile, "but before you ferret him out come to the conservatory. I owe you some flowers for the roses you gave me."

"I didn't give them," quickly.

"I think you did. Come!"

"No, I don't care about having any more," nervously, feeling she scarcely knew why, a

sudden dislike at receiving anything from his hands. "I want to go to my brother."

"And I want you to come with me," grave, but very resolute.

Frank's words came into her head, "a man who would go straight at a wall rather than turn to right or left," and she made up her mind at once that she would show there was one girl who would not yield her will to his.

She turned hastily away towards the door of the ball-room, as if she paid no attention to his remark, but she was like a frightened hare resisting the fascination of a box-constrictor.

The serpent lets its victim loose for a short time, knowing that he is certain to win at the last; and Sir Basil, apparently yielding to her wish, drew her small hand through his arm and led her in the wished-for direction.

But when she was near the open folding-doors, and could see the splendid room lit up with myriads of lights and adorned with a wealth of roses, he turned sharply to the left, and before she knew where she was going, she found herself standing in the dim light of the conservatory. Alone amongst the flowers with Sir Basil Fane!

"Now which rose will you have?" looking down at the fresh young beauty with a gleam of triumph in his usually earnest eyes.

She would not look up at him, but cast her eyes on the ground, whilst her lips went into what the man who was watching her thought a delicious pout.

"Not one, thank you."

"But you must. Here, take your choice. I don't know their names, but they are supposed to be the finest in the county. Aren't they good enough for Miss Trevanion?"

"They are lovely, but I don't want them," drawing up her neck rebelliously.

He picked a lovely "Cloth of Gold" and held it out to her.

She shook her head.

His face grew stern, almost forbidding.

"You must and you shall!"

He stood glowering down at her, aware for the first time that she meant to defy him, wondering why it was that he, a hardened man of the world and a saddened one as well, could care so much about a girl's whim. Then a sudden thought came into his mind. He bent his head, and his voice softened.—

"Have you forgotten, Flo?" a passionate reproach in the simple words.

In an instant her face changed. She remembered all she owed to him and was aghast at her own want of gratitude. Her eyes swimming with tears, her breast heaving, she held out her hand.—

"I—I didn't mean it."

A smile came over his face, but a slight trace of the evil temper which she had roused could be seen behind that smile. He was conscious that he had conquered, but he did not choose to have such a scene repeated.

"No," he said, in answer to her gesture, more than to her words, "you despised it."

And the next moment the rose in all the perfection of its beauty was crushed on the floor under the heel of his boot.

Was it an emblem of what she herself would be in the far-off days of the future.

CHAPTER IX.

A few minutes later she stood by the side of the velvet couch on which her brother was lying, looking down into his face with the old affection in her eyes, but a strange flutter in her breast.

Eustace Trevanion looked particularly attractive, his fair head resting on a crimson pillow, his delicate face flushed with a new excitement.

He was dressed for the first time for weeks, in evening dress, with a low waistcoat and a wide expanse of finest shirt-front, his white tie in the newest of bows, a solitaire of simple gold and a watch-chain of a rigid-pattern his only ornaments.

Sir Basil Fane threw a Turkish shawl over his long legs to add, as he said, a touch of the picturesque to his appearance, and then went away without a word or a look to his sister.

"Oh, my darling! How did you manage to get dressed? Are you sure it wasn't bad for you?"

"Not a bit of it; Graham, Fane's own man, helped me. I only wish I had him at The Firs. I always said I ought to have somebody specially to look after me."

"But really Winter does very well, and you know Mr. Willoughby arranged for him to wait upon you only to spare us expense," in the soft tone which she always used to her invalid brother.

"Rubbish! I know we've plenty of money if we could only get at it. But here they come," raising himself on his elbow, and gazing at the crowd of incoming guests with boyish pleasure. "Who's that swell with the diamond star?"

"Lady Rivers. And, oh! Eustace, she knew papa."

"Did she?" his eyes brightening. "Then she knows we are a cut above the rag-tag and bob-tail."

Up came Frank Rivers, anxious as young men generally are to be attentive to the high-and-kim of the girl they specially admire. Whilst he was talking to Eustace, and chaffing about the swell he looked reposing on his velvet cushions, Flora was carried off by a partner.

He looked round intending to claim her, and found to his disgust she was gone.

"There is such a pretty girl over there," said Sir Basil. "Why don't you dance with her?"

"Miss Fothergill?" looking across the room to where she was sitting by her mother's side waiting for the partner who apparently hesitated to come. "She doesn't care about me, and I want to talk to Trevanion."

"Go and see if she won't care for you," said the host, with a smile. "You can't have too many people in love with you at once."

Rivers laughed, pleased as men always are at a compliment to his own fascinations, and walking across the room made his bow.

As soon as the dance was over he resolved that he would pounce upon Flora; but he had the pleasure of being blocked in a doorway with his present partner, whilst he could see the one he was longing after surrounded by a ring of men who were being introduced to her by her host, and who were inscribing their names on her card in rapid succession.

He cursed his own stupidity for not having secured her before, knowing that she was not the sort of girl to leave a blank unasked.

He was young enough to feel his disappointment acutely, and not old enough to hide it, and for half the evening leant against a wall or stood in a doorway meditating over his wrongs. Not that he was sentimentally inclined, only ever since he first found her out he was disposed to look upon Flora as his own property, and was much disgusted when the new man, this unknown baronet, seemed to dispute the matter with him.

"Don't you dance?"

The question was asked of Sir Basil by Philip Fane, a man with a pale thin face, with keen eyes and a small dark moustache. He was something like a bad likeness of his cousin, with all the best part of his expression left out, and with the worst intensified.

Sir Basil started, for at that moment he was engrossed by watching Flora dancing with Rivers, who had won her for a partner at last, and looked thoroughly content with his prize.

They were a handsome pair, well-matched, as he could not help confessing. A craving desire, however, came upon him to stop the waltz, and all at once it seemed to him a monstrous thing that a modest girl should think it permissible to go round the room with a man's arm round her waist. He answered his cousin shortly,—



[JEALOUSY AROUSED.]

"No, I don't make a fool of myself, except when I can't help it."

"I shouldn't mind making a fool of myself if the girl were half as pretty as that Miss Trevanion," he said slowly, putting his eyeglass in position in order to study Flora's face the better as she passed. "You must introduce me when the dance is over."

"She is too simple to suit your vitiated tastes."

"Not if she gets on with you," a cynical smile curling the tips of his moustaches. "Is she to be the mistress of the Abbey?"

A dark frown drew his brows together. His eyes were still fixed on that small head with the pearl star glistening amongst the coils of rich brown hair, as he answered, gravely,—

"No, the Abbey will never have a mistress in my time."

"Not! Really?" with an eager look into his face, to see if he were speaking in earnest. "You must be joking. A pauper swears he won't marry because he doesn't think he will have the chance; a millionaire takes it as his natural fate."

"I'm not a millionaire. I think these men will play this waltz for ever. I had better stop it, and suggest a change."

He stepped forward with the intention of going up to the band, but stopped on seeing Flora Trevanion and Frank Rivers pass through the open window on to the starlit terrace.

"After all," he said to his cousin, "I don't see why I should interfere; the people seem to be enjoying themselves. If you want an introduction to Miss Trevanion come at once, or I shall forget it."

"But where is she?" looking round the room at the fluttering crowd. "I've lost the beauty."

"In the garden."

"Then she won't want us. She will hate me for ever if we interrupt a flirtation," hanging back, as his cousin moved towards the nearest window.

"There is no flirtation. They are old friends. Mrs. Willoughby was telling me all about it just now."

"I don't know Mrs. Willoughby, but I do know a flirtation when I see one. However, it is you who will get into hot-water, and not I," following him out into the garden, muttering to himself,—

"I believe he's hit already; I must keep my eyes open."

Meanwhile, the couple they were seeking were standing under the shadow of a willow, which bent gracefully forward, as if making a reverence to the dewy lawn.

"A shooting-star!" exclaimed Flora. "Wish! wish! before it's too late!"

"Did you?"

She nodded.

"Shall you be happy if you get it?"

"Perfectly."

"I can't flatter myself that it had anything to do with me?"

"No, you can't," a smile hovering on her lips.

"But mine had with you," looking down into her face, and thinking he had never seen anything prettier.

"But you hadn't time to make a wish—I'm sure of that."

"I had got it all ready. I'll tell mine if you'll tell yours."

"It won't spoil the charm?" anxiously.

"It will add to it," with a joyous laugh, at the thought he had in his head. "Yours first."

A gentle gravity stole over her face; and her voice was low, as if she were talking of a prayer.

"I wished that Eustace might be quite well; just like other people."

"I hope he may, with all my heart," said Rivers, sincerely, his kind heart touched by the sister's devotion, although he could have wished that some of it should have been turned in another direction. "And I wished," his own voice sinking, unconsciously, as he

watched her intently, to see the effect of his words, "that when I come back from India—"

"Miss Trevanion, my cousin, begs for an introduction—Mr. Philip Fane—Miss Trevanion!"

Sir Basil's voice cut ruthlessly through his sentence, and the young man's wish was known only to his own breast.

Philip Fane bowed low, as he always did before a beautiful woman, and as he bowed he formed a resolution, in the depths of his selfish heart, that one day he would be master of Greylands, with Flora Trevanion for his bride, if he ruined Sir Basil's life, and broke the young soldier's heart on his way.

As Frank Rivers drove home that night, on the back of his mother's landau, his eyes fell on the topmost words of the yellow placard,—

"MURDER!—£1,000 REWARD!"

plainly visible for all men to read in the ghostly moonlight, and he turned from it with a shudder.

"If I were Sir Basil I'd tear that vile thing down."

"Yes," said Lady Rivers. "It is enough to give the poor man a nightmare."

(To be continued.)

PATIENCE is the finest and worthiest part of fortitude, and the rarest too. Patience lies at the root of all pleasures as well as of all powers. Hope herself ceases to be happiness when impatience accompanies her.

Our true knowledge is to know our own ignorance. Our true strength is to know our own weakness. Our true dignity is to confess that we have no dignity, and are nobody and nothing in ourselves, and to cast ourselves down before the dignity of God, under the shadow of whose wings and in the smile of whose countenance alone is any created being safe.



["OH, MISS GRACE! MISS GRACE, HONEY! WHY DID YOU GO AWAY AND LEAVE ME THAT DAY!"]

NOVELETTE.]

WILFUL AS THE WIND:

CHAPTER VIII.

LLANGWILLIAM.

HONEYMOONS are always uninteresting for outsiders, and ours could be no exception to the rule, as we had neither eyes nor ears for anybody but ourselves. I daresay the people who met us thought that we were intensely selfish and very stupid, but we did not care; this wonderful double life that we were leading was something quite new and absorbing, for we two were indeed one.

It was on a clear October afternoon that we drove up the avenue that led to Llangwilliam Lodge. There was a beautiful purplish bloom over the mountains that surrounded it, and the top of the trees were just tinged with tints of russet-red and golden yellow. Though it was called a lodge it was, in reality, a very handsome house that had been added to from time to time. There was a flight of steps leading up to it, and it was fitted up inside with black oak furniture, blue china, and all the latest novelties in æsthetic art.

A greyed-haired butler opened the door, and a portly housekeeper with a basket of keys stood in the hall to inquire if I wanted anything. No, I wanted nothing but rest and quiet.

"Yes," said Nordale, drawing my arm through his, "your mistress is tired. We have been travelling all the morning. Let us have dinner early, Mrs. Benson, please."

"Oh! let me see the house first!" I cried. "I want so much to look at my new home."

So I went upstairs, and through galleries and passages. The room that interested me most was Nordale's study, which he had lately had fitted up for himself. It was wainscoted, and over his writing-table was the painting of a very beautiful woman. It was the study of

a head in oils; the hair was golden, and the eyes of a peculiar light blue, very wide open; the mouth was pouting, coquettish, wilful.

"What a lovely face!" I cried, stopping before it. "Is it a portrait of some one?"

"Yes," answered Nordale, reluctantly. "Of a relation, at least, a connection of mine."

"Am I likely to see her?"

"No," he replied, "she is abroad at present."

He spoke shortly, as if he did not wish me to ask any more questions; but, all the more, my curiosity was excited, and I hoped to find out what relation this beautiful golden-haired woman was to him. We had now been married more than two months, and yet I had too much of the Bellew pride in me to urge questions which I saw were unwelcome. No doubt I should find out in time. The next few weeks were spent in driving about the country, and taking long rides to some of the beautiful mountains, so that the thought of the portrait gradually became less distinct. As the winter closed in I had one great cause for complaint—not a single soul in the neighbourhood called on me.

I went to church with Nordale every Sunday, but though the Rector sometimes came to the Lodge on business, the Rector's wife never appeared, or recognised my existence in the slightest way.

Nordale used to attend the magistrates' meetings in the village, but though he was "hail fellow well met" with his brethren of the bench, Sir George Pryn and Lord Llangollen, I was completely ignored by their wives. They did not even condescend to leave their cards on me. Why is this? I asked myself. Is it because I have been a circus-rider and an actress? But actresses are visited sometimes, and no one can point the finger at me, or accuse me of bad conduct.

I am as pure as any lady in the land; none of their daughters have a more stainless name than I, Grace Bellew, have always had. I can-

not bear to be treated like a pariah—like an outcast.

I and Nordale ate our Christmas dinner alone. I had proposed inviting Madame Mailly, but he evidently did not like the idea, so I let it drop.

Day after day, during the dreary winter months, I sat up in my pretty drawing-room, filled with chrysanthemums in the glass vases, but not a creature came to disturb me. I wore my beautiful London-made velvet dresses, but there were no female eyes to envy or criticise them.

I wondered if this state of things would always go on—should I be perpetually ostracised from the society in which my husband was welcome, and to which I felt I belonged? If I had children would they, too, be held at arms' length, or, perhaps, openly ignored as I was?

I began to be afraid that my husband, my darling husband, would despise me. He did not appear to feel the way his friends had behaved to me, but I was sure in his secret heart he ought to resent it.

"Nordale," I said to him one day, "your friends must think I am not worth knowing. What have I done that they should slight me as they do? I belong to one of the oldest families in Ireland; the Bellews are as proud as they can be of their blue blood."

"I know, dear," answered Nordale, a little impatiently; "but the people about here are a queer, stuck-up set, and do not generally take to strangers, they are always suspicious of them."

"They can't take to me if they refuse to know me!" I cried. "They are delighted to ask you to their houses, but I am not even allowed to lift my eyes to vulgar old Mrs. Jones at the Rectory. One would think I was not your wife at all, Nordale," and I started up and looked scrutinisingly at him.

He uttered an impatient cry, "Why do you torture yourself like this?" and left the room. For the first time since our marriage I buried

my head in the velvet cushions and burst into tears. What if he, too, were to catch the infection from the rest of the neighbourhood, and regret that he had picked up a wife from a provincial theatre.

To be looked upon as a pariah by the ladies of the neighbourhood was bad enough, but even the faintest suspicion of contempt from my husband, whom I loved as my own soul, was too terrible. I had given up everything for him, and he was the whole world to me. As I paced up and down the room I remembered the portrait of that lovely woman I had seen in his room. Who could she be? He always told me I was the only woman he had ever loved, and the thought of a rival was poison to my jealous nature.

Just then I saw the portly figure of Mrs. Benson, the housekeeper, passing the door, and I called her in. Perhaps she might be able to enlighten me, for she looked like an old family servant.

"You have lived a long time with the Onslow family, Mrs. Benson?" I said, interrogatively.

"Bless your heart, miss, ma'am. We haven't been with Mr. Nordale Onslow more than six months. Benson and me are Londoners, born and bred; we've never been in this part of the country before, and only the times are so bad we'd never have come at all. Mr. Onslow said the reason he took us was because we were strange to these parts. He wanted strangers, he said."

"And you know nothing of his relations, then?"

"Not a thing, miss. There, I do keep calling you miss, for you look too young to be a ma'am. And precious tired I am of this blessed place, for there's never a bit of company or a visitor or anything to brighten us up. We might as well be in a jail. I should think you'd feel moped yourself, ma'am. You'd like to be going to the theatre and back among your own people. I'll warrant you do. It isn't natural for a young woman to live without seeing a strange face, and no gentlefolks seem to like coming here."

"That will do, Benson; you may go," I said, in my haughtiest voice.

But all the same it went through me like a knife that my own servants despised me.

Mine, however, was a most mercurial temperament; tears and smiles were always close together. Nordale came back in a few hours with a new novel from the library, and he read it aloud to me, and we sang together, and I told myself I was a fool for troubling my head about other people. Were we not all to each other? Very likely, in a few years, I would be visited by everyone, and would be recognised for what I was, the honoured wife of one of the first men in the county.

CHAPTER IX.

A SUDDEN RESOLVE.

ONE SNOWY February afternoon, as Nordale was reading to me in the drawing-room, a telegraphic messenger rode up from the village. He had a telegram directed to Mr. Onslow; and as soon as Nordale read it he said he must start at once to catch the next train.

"I hope you have no bad news?" I said, anxiously.

"No, only that I must meet some friends—some connections, I should say—who are to arrive to-morrow morning from Rotterdam by the early boat. I must get my things packed in a few minutes. It is half-past three now, and the train leaves Llangollen at twenty minutes past four, so I have no time to lose."

I had no time either to ask questions, for everything was hurry-scurry. In a quarter of an hour the dog-cart was at the door, and Nordale held me in his arms to say goodbye.

"Don't stay long," I said, as I looked up wistfully at him. "The time will seem so tedious when you are away!"

"You may be sure I will return as soon as ever I can," he answered, stroking my hair. "'Trust me all in all or not at all.' Don't you know that?"

"I darsay the days may seem a little monotonous to you," I said, gulping down a sob, "but I can't help that, and I shall feel all the more nervous and solitary without you."

"Don't take such notions into your head, you silly goose," he said. "I shall count the hours till I am with you again."

With one more long kiss he tore himself away, and the dog-cart drove rapidly down the avenue. I heard the sharp click of the horse's hoofs in the frosty air, and they echoed like strokes of doom on my heart. I could not keep quiet; the house appeared so large and dreary, and there was absolutely nothing to do. The snow came down in thick, small flakes, and the current of life stood still.

But it is only for a little while, I thought. Nordale will soon come back. He knows I am not strong just now, and that I cling to him all the more. In a few months our child will be born, and that will be an additional tie between us.

Just then, I saw lying on the floor the telegram which had come half-an-hour before. I took it up, intending to burn it, when my eyes were caught by the following words:—

"To Nordale Onslow, Esq., Llangwilliam Lodge, Llangollen.—From Mrs. Nordale Onslow, Hotel d'Allamagne, Rotterdam.—Be sure to meet us on Wednesday morning. I have so many things to tell you. Order our rooms at the Langham. I depend upon you entirely."

The paper fell from my hands. "Mrs. Nordale Onslow!" Who was she? Was not that my name?—the name that I had been given at Brogdan church nearly seven months ago? And who was this woman who called herself by the same title, and ordered Nordale to meet her?

It rushed over me like a wave of fire that she might be his real wife, and that I might be only a pretended one. Had I been deceived by a mock ceremony, and yet was it possible? Could Nordale have acted so cruelly, so falsely, so treacherously?

I sat with the fatal telegram in my lap, looking into the fire and going over every incident of the past few months—Sylphide's interrupted hints, Nordale's haste to urge on the marriage, his dislike to bringing me to Nordale Priory, his desire for strange servants—"he wanted strangers"—those were Mrs. Benson's words; and, above all, the portrait that hung over the writing-table in his study. These seemed to confirm the terrible suspicion that almost became a certainty.

She told him to order their room at the Langham, and he had gone off at once without hesitation, and left me.

Oh! yes, he could leave me now that I had palled in his fancy. I was a mere toy that he had taken up, and could throw away at any time. Yet just as I had built up this fabric, stone by stone, the recollection of Nordale's words and looks, that seemed the very soul of truth, his last whispers, "Trust me all in all, or trust me not at all," came back again to me with tenfold force, and I was ready to doubt even the evidence of my own senses against him. I took up a candle and went to his study. I must have another look at that fatal, alluring face, that "connection of his," whom he had seemed so unwilling to be questioned about. Yet there she was, in the most conspicuous place in the room; her blue eyes seemed to mock me, her pouting, coquettish mouth had an arch expression as much as to say, "Nobody can resist me." Was she the real Mrs. Nordale Onslow who was to sail from Rotterdam that evening? An inward voice said she was, and if so, what was I? A creature without a name, only fit to be spurned at. No wonder the ladies of the neighbourhood

refused to know me; no wonder they cast cold glances in my direction; and no wonder who that thought out me to the quick!—that Nordale had become impatient, when I said, "One would think I was not your wife at all."

If I was not his wife, then I must be his mistress, and he had betrayed me into giving up ambition, fame, and fortune—everything I held dear—only to be disgraced. Such thoughts were torture, were agony—the only relief was that there was just a chance that I might be wrong, that there might be some loophole of deliverance, that Nordale might be able to clear himself.

But how faint and feeble was this tiny ray of hope! That night it was useless to try and sleep. I tossed on my solitary pillow; I imagined Nordale eagerly hastening to meet that fascinating creature, whose face he kept perpetually before him; I imagined their greetings; I imagined—great goodness! what can the angry fancy of a jealous woman not imagine?

Once or twice I got up in the night and roamed about the desolate house with a candle in my hand. I could not bear the meaning of the wind; it seemed to lash me to fury. Again I went to Nordale's study. I took up book after book, and paper after paper, but none gave me a clue to the mystery.

At last, I saw a miniature copy of Keats's "Poems" lying on the top of a book-shelf. I opened it, and read on the fly-leaf:—

"Gertrude Nordale Onslow, January 188—."

Ah! Then Gertrude was her name. The date was six months before he met me again at Brogdan. Perhaps he used to read to her out of that very book, before he had been taken by my unfortunate face! Unfortunately, truly! Two days before I had blessed Heaven that I had ever seen him, and thanked a merciful Creator on my bended knees for the happiness of being Nordale Onslow's wife. His wife? Alas! I began to be sure that I was no wife at all.

The laughing, mischievous eyes of the portrait followed me wherever I went. I longed to tear it from the wall and break it into a thousand pieces, but it was too substantial for my feeble strength.

In the morning the snow had cleared away, and I ordered out the ponies to drive to the village, which was about three miles off. I took the reins in my hands, and as the ponies trotted out briskly on the frost-bound roads my spirits revived, and I hoped that perhaps there might be a letter from Nordale which would clear up everything. To take me in by a system of such cruel deception seemed utterly unlike him.

I drove at once to the Post-office, for the second mail came in at twelve o'clock. Yes, there were two letters for me—one from Nordale, but only a few hurried lines to say he had arrived safely at the Langham, and not a word of the mysterious Mrs. Nordale Onslow, who had brought him there. There were some fond injunctions to take care of myself, and not to be worried or nervous while he was absent; they jarred on me so much just now that I tore the letter up and threw it away.

Then I looked at the other. It was written on coarse, cheap paper, in pale ink, the writing not that of an educated person, and the address was misapplied. Who could it be from? I glanced at the signature. There was none. For the first time in my life I had received an anonymous letter. Here it is:—

"You may think you are a very grand lady, but you are quite mistaken. There is another Mrs. Nordale Onslow, and you have no right to the name. Your husband—that is, the man you call your husband—was married in France years ago. The valet that lives with him knows all about it."

"Mr. Onslow has gone to meet his real wife now, and to bring her home to Nordale Priory. If you had the spirit of a mouse you would go away, and not live on at his house, eating his bread and driving in his carriages and riding his horses, and calling yourself by a

name that doesn't belong to you. That's why all the grand people in the county won't look the same side of the road with you.

"If you don't go you will be turned out some day, and serve you right! Pride deserves a fall; and you were always a vain, upsetting mix, trying to cut out honest people that had a better right to their living than you had. You had better take a friend's advice and go."

"When Mr. Nordale Onslow comes back he will be precious glad to be rid of you without any trouble or bother. He does not want you at all, or care to see your face again, you may be precious sure of that."

There was no more. It was quite enough. My heart had turned to stone as I read it.

"Won't you take a seat, ma'am," said the postmistress. "You aren't looking well?"

"Oh, yes," I cried, "I am quite well, perfectly well, thank you."

"There was a person here," she added, leaning her head confidentially over the counter, "who was asking for you."

"What sort of person?"

"Well, I can't exactly say. She wasn't a lady; she had red hair, and an odd look about her. She said she used to know you in Ireland at a circus."

"Ah! Where is she now?"

"Oh, she's gone I expect. She knew Mrs. Benson up at the Lodge; they used to go about together, and talk—didn't they talk?"

It must be Sylphide—Sylphide, my enemy! No doubt she came to triumph over my downfall. I was quite determined to leave the Lodge that night. It would be torture to remain there any longer; all the proud blood of the Bellows cried out against it. Yes, I would go; I did not care whither. Nordale might look for me, but I would hide myself so well he should not be able to find me. Perhaps he would not even wish to find me. The letter said he wanted to get rid of me as an encumbrance, and it was probably right.

I drove back as quickly as possible, and lost no time in packing up a few things in a small bag. I took my mother's locket and ring, which Madame Mailly had given back to me; they were almost the only ornaments that were not presents from Nordale. The whole room was filled with his gifts. There was the diamond stars he had sent on the first night I played Ophelia; there were the pearls which he had said were not as white as my neck; there was a matchless set of rubies! I hated the sight of them now. As for the early relics of him, which I always kept stored up in tissue paper, I flung them into the fire. It was by these he had tracked me, an innocent, trusting child, to my terrible disgrace. When it came to my wedding-ring I could not put that up with the other gifts; it reminded me too much of that blissful day at Brogden church, when the waves plashed and the larks sang, and my heart rejoiced with a joy too deep for words.

It was over now. The last thing I did was to write a few lines to Nordale, and leave the note on his study-table. It cost me a great pang and many tears to do it.

"When you get this"—I wrote—"I shall be gone. I cannot bear the shame of remaining here any longer. You are with your real wife now; she has a right to your name, and I have only a pretended one. You might have told me the truth; I could have borne it better than this. Oh! my love, how I have loved you!—how I love you still! And yet you have treated me so cruelly that I think my heart is broken. I believed in you as I believe in Heaven, and you have deceived me. Perhaps when our child is born I shall die. It would be the best thing that could happen to me. From her whom you used to call

"YOUR OWN GRACE."

Then I opened the hall-door and went into the cold, frosty air. I had entered that house, as I believed, a happy, honoured wife—I went out of it a degraded, forsaken woman.

CHAPTER X.

ROUGHING IT.

I WALKED to the little roadside station, carrying my bag in my hand. It was nearer to us than the village, but still it was a walk of a mile and a half. I wished to walk. I did not like to bring out the carriage and horses, which I felt I had no right to.

It was getting dusk when I arrived at the ticket-office. A train was evidently expected, for the clerk put out his head, and said, "Where to, ma'am?"

"To London," I answered. I had always heard that people could conceal themselves better in London than anywhere else. The idea of going to Madame Mailly was quite out of the question, for I should be found with her at once.

"First-class?" said the clerk, clicking the ticket as a matter of course before he got the money, for I had often gone short journeys into Avedale from that station.

"No—third," I answered.

He stared at me. I wore a rich sealskin dolman, which Nordale had bought for me soon after we were married. It had cost fifty pounds, and it certainly would look out of place in a third-class carriage.

But I was obliged to wear it, for I had no common jacket, and the wintry air was piercingly cold. I took the ticket from the clerk, and as the train stopped I jumped into a third-class compartment. It was crammed with country women and working men in fustian clothes. They gazed at me as if I were an apparition.

"Guess you've got into the wrong box, missus," said one of them. "You'd better change carriages at the next station."

I was very much inclined to do so, and pay the extra fare; but I remembered that I had only ten pounds with me, and it might have to last a long time, so I had better be careful of it.

"Ah!" said one of the women, shaking her head; "there's many a one as travels third that used to travel first. There's ups and downs in everything. But, lor! Jimima," turning to her companion, "did you ever see such a cloak as that? Why it's good enough for the Queen. I wonder how she came by it."

And then came a titter from Jimima, and a long whispering, which I could not hear. I leaned back in the corner of the greasy, onion-smelling carriage, and felt thoroughly miserable. What a step this was which I had taken! There was no turning back from it now. I had thrown myself on the cold, cruel world, and I must go on.

It was about eleven o'clock at night when the train arrived at Euston, and I and my bag were put into a cab by an attentive porter, who was evidently impressed by the magnificence of my cloak, and expected a tip in consequence.

"Where shall I tell the man to drive to, ma'am?" he asked, putting in his head.

I hesitated. "I—I really don't know. Perhaps he knows of some lodgings."

Being appealed to, cabbies announced that he did know some lodgings off the Strand, and I was accordingly driven there.

The door was opened by a dirty-looking servant-boy. The narrow hall, the worn oil-cloth, the close stuffy smell, were too much for me.

I turned back to the cab again, crying, "Oh, I can never go there! You must drive me somewhere else."

"Will you go to a hotel?" inquired my driver.

"No, it is too late. Besides, hotels are very expensive, and I cannot afford to spend much money."

Cabbies rubbed his nose thoughtfully, and at length said, "My wife has got a little room to let. You could have that if you like. It is a poor place, but it's clean, and perhaps it would do you for a bit."

"Oh, yes," I answered, joyfully. "I am sure it would! Drive me there at once."

So we drove down a great many back streets. I was not prepared for anything at all grand; but I confess my heart sank when we turned into a narrow stable lane and stopped before a small two-storied house, which looked out on a mews. A woman put her head out of the window and cried, "So you've come back, Jim!"

"Yes," he answered, "and I've brought you a lodger, Betsy; so there's luck for you, old woman."

Betsy came down with great alacrity, and carried my bag up the narrow stairs, while I followed her.

The room into which she showed me was very small and very bare. There was nothing in it but a bed, a table, a drab washing-stand, and one solitary cane chair.

I sank into the chair and looked round. There was an overpowering smell of stables, decayed cabbages, London smoke—all combined; while the room itself was not as good as that which our under-groom at Llangwilliam slept in. But I was glad of even this harbour of refuge.

The last time I had been in London I was staying at a splendid mansion in Cromwell-road. I had ridden in the Row with Nordale, and driven with him in the Park; and now I had come down to a stable lane!

"I should like a fire," I said, "and a cup of tea."

"A fire!" exclaimed Betsy, "why you'd be roasted; the room's too small for a fire."

"Still I should like it! I am very, very cold, and, oh! so tired."

I flung back my cloak, and laid my throbbing head on the pillow. Betsy stood opposite, and surveyed me attentively.

"Have you any friends in London?" she asked, after a pause.

"No—not any."

I saw her glancing curiously at the wedding-ring on my finger, and I was glad I had not taken it off.

"So you've got a husband, anyway?" she said; "that's a good thing. I suppose he'll be coming to look after you?"

"Oh, please don't talk to me," I cried. "I really cannot bear it; I am quite worn out. All I want is to be left alone."

I heard the sapient Betsy muttering to herself as she went down the stairs, "I hope to gracious she's not getting a fever. If she is, we must pack her off to the hospital."

"An hospital!" I thought, "will they send me to an hospital? Perhaps I shall die there, and be buried in a nameless grave, and no one will ever know anything more about me. Oh! Nordale, what have you done?"

Betsy, who informed me that her name was Mrs. Matthews, soon came back with the tea, and began to light the fire. She courteously told me that I had better undress, and go to sleep.

But sleep was impossible. I tossed about on the mean little bed, and longed for morning to come. It came at last.

When Betsy saw my wild eyes and crimson cheeks, she said she must send for a doctor. He came, and pronounced that I was over-excited and must keep quiet.

But how could I keep quiet? I wanted to go out and look for some work. I wanted to earn money in order to support myself. But Betsy locked the door, and declared I should not leave her home; for if I did, very likely I should be brought back on a stretcher.

She had ascertained the state of my finances, and had satisfied herself that I had enough money to pay her for some time to come; so there was no further talk of the hospital.

But this keeping quiet was terrible work. I sat in the stuffy little room, with my hands on my lap and my brain in a perfect whirl. What was Nordale doing? Was he thinking of me? Had he got my letter?—and, oh! madness, was he at Nordale Priory with his real acknowledged wife; and was I forgotten, like a dead man, out of mind?—I whom he had seemed almost to worship! Often and often I cried out to him in the bitterness of my soul; but there was no answer, except the

perpetual roll of the wheels in the street close by.

"Give me—give me, in mercy!" I cried to the good-natured little doctor who came to see me, "something to lull my brain, to prevent me from thinking. If I think much longer, I shall go mad—I know I shall."

After two or three strong narcotics I sank into a state of unconsciousness, and I remember nothing, till one evening I awoke and heard a pitiful little wail that I knew was the voice of my own child—our child, that we had been so anxiously expecting.

He had come then, the child that I had hoped would be the heir of the Nordale property, and the inheritor of an ancient name. He had opened his eyes in a narrow, stable lane, with no one but a cabman's wife to attend on him!

"Give me my child!" I cried, putting out my arms. "I want to see him."

"Here he is," said Mrs. Matthews, handing me a roll of flannel; "but I wouldn't have you set your heart on him too much, for I don't expect he'll live; seven months' children seldom do."

"Nonsense!" I cried, angrily; "why shouldn't he live? He must! he shall live!" and I clasped the little bundle closer to me. He certainly was very small, but I thought his blue eyes were like Nordale's, and I kissed him again and again. "Oh! why isn't Nordale here?" I sobbed. "I want him so much. My heart is crying out for him."

"Now, there you go working yourself up again!" cried the irate Betsy. "You'll have yourself in a raging fever if you don't look out, and I'm sure I've had worry enough with you already. Look at all the saucepans on the kitchen fire—beef tea, arrowroot, and I don't know what besides. Why, twenty pounds wouldn't pay me for all I've gone through!"

Twenty pounds! and I had only brought ten pounds with me, and probably that had been all spent when I was lying unconscious. I had my sealskin cloak, however. I had read of people pawning their clothes in cases of necessity, and I must do it now.

I told Mrs. Matthews to get what she could for it, and she took to the idea with avidity. She undid it from the peg and went out.

She only got fifteen pounds for it, but as long as this lasted neither I nor the child need starve.

In about five weeks' time I was able to get up and sit by the fire, feeling entirely helpless and exhausted.

And the child was always ill; he had constant attacks of croup, and used to wail in a pitiful way that went to my very heart.

It made me angry to see Mrs. Matthews shake her head as she looked at him.

"It'll never do much good," she prophesied. "He's not a bit like one of my children."

"No, I suppose not," I answered, proudly, as I rocked him to and fro in my arms.

"And I tell you what you ought to do, missus; you ought to get him christened, for he may drop off any day, and it isn't safe not to make a Christian of him."

"He may be christened as you call it, but he will live—he shall live!" I cried.

This little, frail infant was all I had to remind me of Nordale, and I clung to him as a shipwrecked man clings to the last rope that remains.

I called him after his father, Ferdinand Nordale Onslow but alas! though the spring came on; he showed no signs of improvement, but slowly dwindled and pined as a fading flower in the sunshine.

"It is this horrid, close den that is killing him!" I cried, starting up. "He must have change of air—that will do him good."

"If you get change of air for him," tartly replied Mrs. Matthews, "you'll have to get money to pay for it. You owe me a week's rent already," and she slammed the door and went downstairs.

After she was gone I began seriously to con-

sider how I could manage to make some money.

The only thing I could do was to act, and I remembered that Mr. Reed, who had engaged me at Brogden, was now the manager of a London theatre, and a man of authority. I would go at once to him and ask him to give me a part in a new play he was bringing out.

I dressed myself as becomingly as I could without my sealskin cloak, and called at the theatre.

After a long wait I was admitted to see him.

He stared blankly at me, and said he had not the pleasure of my acquaintance.

"Mr. Reid," I said; "don't you remember me? I was called Mademoiselle Grazia, and acted Ophelia at Brogden with your company last July."

"Oh! yes, to be sure. You married, I remember. Dear me! how you are altered! I should never have known you."

"I want you to engage me for this new play you are bringing out next week."

"Impossible, quite impossible."

"Oh! yes, you must give me a small part. I don't care how small—a waiting-maid, anything at all."

"Perhaps I might be able to manage that, but really, Mrs.—I forget your name—there is a considerable difference between your appearance last year and this. Then you were a splendid-looking girl, with a bloom like a peach; now you are faded and worn, and look ten years older than you did."

"Oh! but I shall dress up well, never fear."

The end of it was that a small part—the part of a lady's maid—was allotted to me. I had only a few sentences to say, and was to get five shillings a-night, but for even this I was thankful.

When the night came I hurried to the theatre rather late, for my poor wailing child seemed even worse than usual, and I did not like to leave him.

I dressed hastily, for I had to appear early in the piece, and to say these words,—

"Pray, madam, what has become of your husband? Has he left you altogether?"

I got half way, but suddenly my voice broke down, and I burst into tears. I was hustled off the stage, amidst scolding and abuse that I could not answer.

"What have you done, you fool?" cried the angry manager. "You have nearly ruined the piece. This is what I get for taking in women out of charity!"

"Forgive me!" I cried. "I could not help it. Give me my money, and let me go."

"Money! much money you deserve for a break-down. It's you that ought to pay me. There's half-a-crown for you, and now go away, and don't let me ever see your face here again."

I seized the half-crown, and rushed home. I found the little room full of women; in the midst of them, on the bed, was stretched the wasted form of my poor baby. He was drawing husky, painful gasps for breath, they were evidently his last struggles. I caught him in my arms, he threw up his tiny hands, looked once in my face, and—died!

"He's gone!" cried Mrs. Matthews, "poor lamb! I always knew he would."

"Keep your knowledge to yourself, then," I cried, stung to agony. "My child, my darling, have I lost you?" I sobbed, leaning over him. "Will you never smile at me again? I am indeed alone—quite, quite alone."

"And I'm delighted you are," cried a fierce voice behind me. Looking round I saw the lurid eyes of Sylphide; her red hair stood out round her face like the tresses of a Fury.

"I'm delighted to see you stripped of everything, with your dead baby in your arms," she screamed. "It is just what you deserve. You came and took the bread out of my mouth, and I swore I'd have my revenge, and I've got it. It's as sweet as sweet can be. You didn't know who raised the storm of hisses the night you fell in your dance at the theatre. It was

I. You didn't know who helped to drive you from your grand home—it was I. And I'd do ten times more, for I hate and detest every bone in your body. You lorded it over me, and now you've had your day. I hope you'll go on suffering—more of that to you, my lady! I hope you'll always be poor, and naked, and friendless, and alone, as you've helped to make me. And now, good-bye to you!"

With a dreadful laugh she opened the door, and went out. Was she right? Was I reaping as I had sown?

CHAPTER XI.

A GLIMPSE OF LIGHT.

By the time I had paid for my poor baby's funeral I was left without a farthing in the world. The only resource now was to turn my hand to needlework, and I did succeed in getting some coarse shirts from one of the shops.

But though I worked from six in the morning till late at night, by the time I had paid for the hire of a machine, I could only clear fourpence three-farthings a-day. And I had to live on that, and pay for the stuffy little room which was full of such terrible memories to me. Still, even such work as this was better than none at all, and I determined to do a certain amount every day.

One evening I sent Mrs. Matthews out for two halfpenny candles; she came back with them wrapped in a large piece of greasy newspaper. It was a treat to me to see even a piece of newspaper, and I threw my work away, and began to read the half-obliterated scraps of news.

Suddenly my eyes were startled by the following advertisement which was covered with patches of grease:—

"Information wanted of Grace Bellew, formerly of Ballymachranshan Castle, Co. Kerry, Ireland. Apply to Messrs. Overend and Sons, solicitors, Red Lion-square, E.C."

I turned eagerly to the date of the paper; it was torn off, but I guessed that it was nearly a month old. Well! no matter. I would certainly go the next morning to Messrs. Overend and Sons, and ask what information they wanted about me.

I was sure of one thing, that the advertisement was not from Nordale, for he would certainly have called me by the name I last went by, and that was his own. It must be my Irish relations that were inquiring for me, and how, that I was deserted and alone, my heart naturally turned to them.

May had come in that year with showers of hail and rain, and as I wended my way to Red Lion-square the wind blew pitilessly on my unprotected arms and neck, which had nothing to cover them but a thin cashmere dress, now worn almost threadbare by the hard service I had put it to. But it was still respectable, and my velvet bonnet was unmistakably French.

When I got to the office I found a boy sitting on a high stool writing in a ledger. I rapped against the desk to arouse his attention, and he turned round and surveyed me.

"I want to see Mr. Overend," I said, eagerly.

"He has gone out."

"When will he be back?"

"Can't tell."

"I had better wait till he comes in. When is he generally in?"

"He goes out about dinner-time."

"It's not dinner-time yet. Won't he be in before that?"

"He may be in at twelve o'clock, I couldn't say."

He handed me a chair, and I sat down. Why are solicitors' offices always so uninviting? Why are the windows always dusty? Why do they have mangy quill pens stuck in muddy ink-bottles; and why, oh! why, does the time pass so tediously there? I had only had a cup of weak, cold tea, and a piece of dry bread for my breakfast, and I was utterly

exhausted as hour after hour passed away. Just as I was thinking of going away in despair, a short, stout man with grey whiskers bustled in from the street.

"Is that Mr. Overend?" I whispered to the boy.

"Yes; the senior partner."

I rushed up to him.

"You have been advertising in the *Telegraph* for Grace Bellow. I came to say that I am she."

"Humph! It's all very well to come here saying that," he answered; "but we business men require proofs. What proofs have you got?"

"I have my mother's locket and ring," I answered, after a moment's consideration.

"Where are they then?—produce them."

"They are pawned; give me the money and will release them."

"A likely story! give you the money, indeed! If I did, in all probability I should never see your face again. No, no, young woman! that's a clever dodge of yours, but we are up to all sorts of dodges here."

"Then send your clerk. I don't want to touch the money; he can take it, and I will give him the tickets."

I handed them to him with as much pride as I could summons to my aid.

After some whispering, Mr. Overend agreed to send the clerk, and in half-an-hour he returned with the locket and ring.

"Yes," said the senior partner, turning them over, "they do appear to be the articles mentioned. There is G. B. here in red pearls and the Bells crest on the ring; but all the same, we don't know how they have come into your possession. They certainly don't prove you to be the Grace Bellow we are in search of. Have you no one to identify you?"

"Is my father alive?" I asked.

"No; he died last year."

"Aunt Rebecca—is she dead, too?"

"Yes; she died several years ago."

"Then I don't know anyone except my old nurse, Margaret O'Brien."

"Ah! she is here, in London," answered Mr. Overend; "we can produce her. James" to the clerk—"run over to Mrs. O'Brien, and tell her she is wanted, but be careful not to mention anything about this lady."

It seemed ages till Margaret came. I had been really fond of her, and I longed to see anyone from my own old home. She was a comely, middle-aged woman when I left; now, I saw a shrivelled-up old dame, with a frilled cap round her face, coming in at the door. She shrieked aloud when she saw me; then she made one rush, and flinging her arms round my neck, she burst out,—

"Oh, Miss Grace, Miss Grace, honey! Why did you run away and leave me that day? I've never been the better of it."

"I think this proves the lady's identity with Grace Bellow," said Mr. Overend, turning to his partner.

"Well, yes, but we still have a few questions to ask before we are quite satisfied."

"Can you relate?" he asked, turning to Margaret, "what you did after Miss Bellow left you?"

"What did I do, is it, your honour?" answered Margaret; "sure, I didn't know what in the living air to do. I thought the life would leave me. And then some one said, 'Arrah! don't be botherin' yerself, it's gone home the child is, you may take your word for that.' So back with me to the Castle, as fast as the horse's legs could go, but there was no tale or tidings of her there aither; and when I told the mather, heaven rest his soul, he was clane distracted, and so was Miss Rebecca. Off we set to Tralee agin, but 'twas two days since Miss Grace had gone, and though the polis did their best they couldn't get word of her at all, at all. Thin they raised the cry after the circus-man, but he cursed and swore that he knew nothin', except that a girl out of his circus had died of spotted fever and was buried in Clonagad churchyard, so we had to be content with that. And now

here she is, my own blessed Miss Grace, and glad and thankful I am to set eyes on her agin afore I die. But sure, honey, you'r not what you were, at all. It was you that had the proud eye and the saucy toss of your head, and the bloom in your cheek like a rose, but now you're worn to skin and bone, and though you hold your head high, there's a look in your face that goes to my heart."

"Oh, nurse!" I said, leaning my hand on her shoulder, "I have suffered so much since I left you. It would have been better if I had never run away with the circus-people."

"To be sure it would. What had the likes of you to do with dirty rubbish like them? But you were always bent on your own way, Miss Grace. I never saw such a child. Before anyone knew what you were at, you'd rushed off on some vagary you took into your head. Isn't there a mark on your arm—I know it well—that you got from burning yourself with a red hot iron, just when I told you to lave it alone."

She pushed back my sleeve. Yes, the white mark was still there—another evidence, if any were needed, of my self-will.

"Then, Margaret O'Brien, you are prepared to identify this young lady as Miss Grace Bellow?" said Mr. Overend, as he bowed to me.

How changed his tone now was to what it had been an hour before!

"Is it I 'dentity her?" cried Margaret, taking me by the hand. "Sure, I'd swear to her afore lords and commons—afore judge and jury—I'd go down on my bended knees afore them, and swear by the blessed Saints and the Holy Virgin that she's the very same I took from her mother and held in my arms when she wasn't a day old."

"We can't desire anything stronger than that," said Mr. Overend, smiling, "and now, Miss Bellow, it is your turn. Will you kindly give your account of yourself, and let us see if it agrees with the information we have previously received."

"Arrah! What does he go on with his fine words for?" muttered Margaret. "Shure, oughtn't he to know that you are the daughter of the Bells, the best blood in Munster—the ould ancient stock that used to sit up like King David, with crowns on their heads and harps in their hands? Oughtn't we to know that you're the lady of Ballymachranshan Castle this very minute?"

"Am I?" I said, turning to Mr. Overend.

"Yes, undoubtedly you are when your identity is fully established."

"Shall I be rich?"

"Not exactly rich. The property is encumbered, but I suppose you will have about three hundred pounds a-year."

"Oh! thank Heaven for that," I exclaimed, lifting up my eyes, for the hope of escaping from the terrible atmosphere of the stable lane seemed almost too good to be true. "Shall I, indeed have enough to live on? Shall I see the mountains and the broad Atlantic once again before I die? Oh! Margaret, how I wish we were back at Ballymachranshan now."

It was easy work to tell my story till I came to the meeting with Nordale. My voice began to tremble, and I did not know how to go on.

"It's love that's botherin' her," muttered Margaret. "Shure, it plays the mischief with all the girls. But, Holy Virgin deliver us!" she cried, as she took up my hand, "it's married she is. There's a wedding ring on her finger as sure as my name is Margaret O'Brien."

"Yes, I believed, I was sure, that I was married—to Mr. Nordale Onslow, but—" my voice broke down, and I burst into tears.

"Mr. Nordale Onslow!" exclaimed the two Mr. Overends together. "He has been here every day inquiring if we have heard anything of his wife, formerly Grace Bellow."

"I was told," I cried, choking down my tears, "that he was longing to get rid of me."

"Then you must have been grossly misinformed. He called here about you the very day after his stepmother was married, in a

state bordering on distraction. He has tried—"

"His stepmother!" I gasped. "Who is she? Tell me—tell me at once."

"She is, or rather was, another Mrs. Nordale Onslow like yourself."

Then Mr. Overend took a chair opposite to me, and related the whole history of the Nordale-Onslow family, to which I listened with greedy ears. How old Mr. Nordale Onslow, when he was sixty-five, chose to marry a beautiful young girl of nineteen, and brought her home to Nordale Priory. She and her stepson, who was only a few years older than herself, were constantly thrown together, and as she was very winning and lovable, they became great friends.

When the old squire was on his death-bed he made Nordale promise to be her guardian and protector in any difficulty that might arise. It was not an easy task, for Mrs. Nordale Onslow was both flighty and wilful. Her year of widowhood was hardly over when her stepson was obliged to go abroad, and to leave the gay young widow in possession of Nordale Priory. She filled it with company, she gave balls and fêtes, and the country rung with her fascinations, her flirting and her freaks. At last, she went too far; her character was compromised, she was cut by all her friends, and obliged to leave the country. She took refuge at Carlsbad, and then she made the acquaintance of a disreputable French Count, who was separated from his wife—not divorced—so he could not marry again.

Mrs. Nordale Onslow and he became inseparable; they travelled together, and afforded plenty of conversation to all the scandal-mongers they met.

Last winter the Countess died, and it was then that Mrs. Nordale Onslow telegraphed to her stepson to get everything ready for her, and to meet her at Harwich. He obeyed, and she and the French count were married from the Langham a few days after their arrival.

This was the whole mystery of Mrs. Nordale Onslow the first, and as I listened the scales gradually fell from my eyes. I saw now why Nordale disliked to go into any particulars about the original of the portrait that hung in his study. He was naturally reserved, he had an affection for his fascinating young stepmother, and yet he knew that her name was tabooed in the family, and never mentioned, except as a term of reproach and disgrace.

Perhaps at Llangwilliam, when he was almost a stranger, I had been confused with my namesake, and Sylphide had traded on all these complications and had spread reports which were easily believed on account of the similarity of name.

She found it easy to spin all these little threads into a net, and to write that fatal letter which had proved such a snare to my heated imagination.

"Oh! what a wretched fool I have been!" I moaned, as Mr. Overend finished his story. "What possessed me to act as I did? I see it all now. Why—why did I rush off without waiting for an explanation? Why did I believe the lies in Sylphide's cruel letter? If I had only stayed quiet and trusted to my husband all would have been well."

"Will you go to him now?" asked Mr. Overend. "He is at Nordale Priory. I heard from him to-day."

"No," I answered, as the colour flamed to my cheeks. "I am ashamed to go. He may come to me—I will not go to him."

There was no more difficulty about proving my identity with Grace Bellow. The necessary papers were signed in a few days, and I was declared the rightful owner of Ballymachranshan Castle, with all the rights and privileges thereof. How delightful it was to be able to pay off Betsy Matthews—to see her curtsying at the narrow door, and to feel myself driving away from the stable lane for ever!

"Oh! Margaret," I cried, turning to my old, faithful companion, "what a terrible time I spent there!—I can't tell how terrible.

But perhaps it did me good, and took down some of my pride."

"There's nothin' like th' ould country, after all," said Margaret, who had all the devotion of an Irishwoman for her native land, "and maybe himself'll come and cheer you up. Bad luck to him for a husband if he doesn't! for now that you've got the good atin' and drinkin' and the fine, warm clothes, you're beginning to look like yourself agin—bright and fresh and rosy as when you gladdened the hearts of all that came near or nigh you in the kingdom of Kerry."

"Ah! Margaret, you were always a flatterer!" Flattery had been of late so scarce that it had all the charm of novelty, and I could not help giving it a welcome.

CHAPTER XII.

THE DESIRED HAVEN.

Our long journey was over. We arrived at Teale Station, and I smelt the whiff of the Atlantic. Oh! how different from that close, pestiferous atmosphere which I had breathed for four long months in the stable lane! I had no carriage, so we had to hire a car, and to drive thirty-one miles through the wild pass of Comes Hill before I could arrive at my castlehome.

How romantic it looked in the ghostly moonlight, the silvery beams flicking the laughing, rejoicing waves as they rushed in towards the shore! And once I had been glad—eager to leave it for the sawdust, the noise, and the emulation of a circus! We do change, indeed, and as little will our child's garments fit us as the hopes and ideas of a bygone day.

I went over every room from attic to cellar, planning alterations and improvements. I felt delightfully important, and as rich as Croesus. In that turret window looking out in the west I would have a little plush table and a chair to match, so that I could sit and watch the Blaaket Inlands, and the booming waves, and the white gulls that whirled round the rocks; and next to me I would have a room fitted up for Margaret, so that I might go in and have a chat with her whenever I was inclined.

Should I feel solitary? Ah! perhaps I should, for ghosts of the past would rise before my accusing conscience, and Nordale would not be here—the whom I had once called my second self! Whenever I thought of him my heart beat and my colour rose; his parting words had been to "trust him all in all, or not at all," and at the first trial my faith had given way completely. How could I have been so base, so little-minded, as to doubt him! A suspicion, a rumour, an idea, a lying letter—and the whole structure of my faith had gone down like a house of cards.

Some days after our arrival at the Castle I was sitting in my eyrie in one of the turret-windows, when I looked down and saw a figure climbing up the little, threadlike path which led up from the sea. It was a dangerous path for those who were not accustomed to it; the rocks were slipping from the surf, the tide was coming in fast—one slip, and a person might be precipitated down from a height of fifty or sixty feet into the foaming, frothing waters below. Who could be the daring tourist who would attempt such a climb? Strangers seldom visited our remote region. During the year there were not more than three or four, if so many. I leaned far out of the window to watch the progress this rash adventurer made. Sometimes I caught sight of a grey tweed suit, and sometimes I could see nothing at all of it; and how the waves roared underneath! If the wind got up, and it sometimes did even on calm June days, who could tell what might happen—a scream, a splash, a ripple, and all would be over!

Fascinated by the thought of such danger so close to me I hurried downstairs, and out into the air. There, on the point of a rock, I stood. Was the tourist in sight? How was he getting on? Just in the steepest place I caught a

glimpse of the tweed suit, then another, and another. Surely I knew that tall figure, that noble head, that tawny hair and beard, those penetrating, blue eyes! Yes; it was Nordale—it was my husband!

My first impulse was to scream to him—to tell him to be careful—not to look round, not to slip, but I checked myself. I must be silent, I must be still. No one should see me or know I was there. The slightest diversion might be his death; a start of surprise, a sudden movement, and I might see him disappear down the giddy height.

Slowly, very slowly, he came. Great goodness, was he getting exhausted. Was his head reeling—were his feet slipping from under him? What agony it would be to see him perish before my eyes, when, as yet, he had not told me I was forgiven! Oh! if I could only speak to him once! Never till now had I known how firmly he was knit into every fibre of my being.

"Great Heaven," I cried, "have mercy on him. Kill me if thou wilt, dash me to pieces from this precipice, but save him, save my Nordale, save the desire of my heart, the light of my eyes, save him alive!"

Are such prayers as these always heard? Alas! no. Sometimes they come back to us again like stones. We look for light, and behold darkness, for joy, and lo! the terrible blackness of despair. But this time Heaven was gracious—more gracious than I deserved.

The steepest part of the path was passed, the danger was almost over—it was over. I rushed from my place of concealment, I stood on the point of the rock, and, as he climbed the last few steps, I held out my arms to him.

"Oh, Nordale!" I cried, "you are safe. Thank Heaven, you are safe! I have been watching you all this terrible hour."

He came closer and closer; we looked into each other's eyes, and the next moment I felt myself clasped to his breast, and I had buried my face on his shoulder.

"Forgive me," I sobbed, "forgive me, my husband, that I did not trust you enough. I have been wrong, foolish, cruel, wicked, but forgive me, for I loved you through all."

"And I, too, Gracie, have been to blame. I should have been more open with you. I should have explained about Gertrude; but I had an affection for her, and I did not like to expose her wrong-doings to you. No wonder you were puzzled, you erratic Irish diamond, by all this mystery!"

"Oh, Nordale!" I sobbed, "it is so good to have you here. You cannot think all I have gone through. It cut me to the heart to see our little child die before my eyes. He was so like you. I often longed to carry him, and put him into your arms."

"Don't worry yourself looking back into the past, darling," he said, stroking back my hair. "The past is no longer ours, but the future is. Heaven give us grace to use it better!"

"Promise me one thing," I cried. "Never bring me again to Llangwilliam Lodge, for I won't submit to be snubbed by your friends."

"They won't attempt it," he laughed, "for now you have a castle of your own to retire to."

"And I will invite you here," I cried, "in the summer for the fishing and shooting. Oh! my own heart's love, I wish I had a thousand castles, and you should have them all, every one."

My tale is now nearly told. I have only one more thing to say. Many years after our happy reunion, during which time life seemed to smile at us, and children's voices echoed in the old castle walls, I happened to pay a visit to London.

One bleak, winter's day I stood at the crowded crossing at the top of Ludgate-hill. There was a block of carriages, waggons, and omnibuses, and, as I waited for an opportunity to pass, my eyes chanced to fall on the face of a shabby, shivering woman next to me.

How ill she looked. How blanched and

sunken were her thin cheeks, and what dark circles were round her hollow eyes! And, surely, something in the defiant expression of that face was familiar to me. Yes, it was Sylphide, a shadow of her former self, but still it was she, and no other.

"Sylphide!" I exclaimed, almost involuntarily.

She turned round sharply.

"Yes," she said, "it is me. I cursed you once, but the curse has passed from you and fallen on me. Look at me, and be glad if you like. I am weak, worn, wasted, almost dying."

"What do you take me for?" I cried. "Should your misfortune make me glad? No. If you tried to injure me once I have forgiven it all long ago."

I called a cab, put her into it, and drove home with her. It may have been a sudden impulse (all my impulses were sudden), but it was one that I could not resist.

I knew that my former enemy had but a few days to live, and, while I could, I would heap coals of fire on her head.

We gave her warmth, food, medicine, but all was in vain. She lay almost insensible, sometimes rousing up for a few minutes, and then sinking back into stupor.

One evening the nurse came to me and said,—

"She is calling for you, Mrs. Onslow. Come at once."

I went.

As I stood at the bedside, Sylphide caught my hand, and whispered, in a choked voice,—

"Forgive! forgive!"

"I do forgive with all my heart, Sylphide," I cried, kneeling beside her. "And you, too, have something to forgive me. I was proud, tyrannical, overbearing to you. Heaven forgive us both!"

The hush that fell over the room seemed to say that our prayers were heard, and so Sylphide passed away in peace.

[THE END.]

In life sincerity is the sure touchstone of character. The good and valuable man is he who strives to realise day by day his own sincere conceptions of true manhood. Thousands are struggling to exhibit what some one else admires, to reach the popular standard, to be or appear to be respectable or honourable; but few make it their aim to live thoroughly up to their own individual convictions of what is right and good. Carlyle well says, "At all turns a man who will do faithfully needs to believe firmly. If he have to ask at every turn the world's suffrage, if he cannot dispense with the world's suffrage, and make his own suffrage serve, he is a poor eye-servant, and the work committed to him will be misdone."

MUSTARD AND PNEUMONIA.—A physician says: "Pneumonia can be cured if the person will apply promptly over the lungs a poultice of mustard and flaxseed meal, keeping quiet and warm in bed. Prompt action is of vital importance, and there is no occasion for waiting for the arrival of a practitioner, when so simple a remedy may be applied by anyone, and if taken in season will, I think, be effective. In my first experience, my determination not to give up business, even for a day, came near costing me my life. The case was neglected till an eminent physician said that my right lung would be of just as much use to me out on the table as in the condition it then was, a fact of which I was already pretty well aware, but the mustard and flaxseed poultice mastered the disease and restored my lung to its normal condition, as good as new. In the second attack, a year later, the case was taken in hand promptly, the poultice applied, quiet and warmth maintained, and speedy recovery ensued without a physician being called." Mustard is an old-fashioned cure, and its healing virtues can hardly be over-estimated. It has saved many a doctor's bill.

BELLE'S FIRST BRIDESMAID.

MISS BELLE SAUNDERS was going to be married. Not only that, but Miss Saunders was aiming to have the "nicest wedding ever given in Boughton." If a florist and a caterer from the city of which Boughton was a suburb, pompous waiters from the Boughton Hotel, a wonderful wedding-dress, a bewilderment of white satin and lace, and seed-pearls, from Madame Montoit, whose prices made one gasp, and the jolliest wedding-party imaginable—if all this did not make hers the nicest wedding Boughton had ever seen, it would be rather astonishing.

It was the evening before the wedding, and everybody was glad of it.

Poor Mrs. Saunders was glad that the fuss and bother and hurry were so nearly over; poor Mr. Saunders was glad of the temporary lull in the influx of bills; Belle was glad that she had got through trying on dresses and trying to look rejoiced over duplicate cake-baskets and pickle dishes; "Sigismund Maynard," as he appeared on the invitations, was glad that his insignificant role of prospective bridegroom was to be taken from the boards; and Wallace Ryder, who was to be his best man, was glad that his trip up to the lakes for boating and fishing purposes would not have to be postponed much longer.

These last three were sitting in the parlour that evening, talking in a comfortable, confidential way.

There was no light; Mr. Maynard and Belle were taking advantage of that on the sofa; Wallace Ryder, stretched out in the largest arm-chair, was aware of the position of Mr. Maynard's arm, but he was politely oblivious.

"I shan't feel perfectly easy," said Belle, musingly, "till after the ten o'clock train is in to-morrow. What if anything should happen that she shouldn't come? Why, we just couldn't be married, Sig."

"Oh, she'll come!" said Sig.

"Who?" said Wallace Ryder, lazily.

"Who!" cried Belle. "Well, of all the absurd questions! Why, Kate Carrolton, of course."

"Kate Carrolton?" Wallace repeated, dimly conscious of having heard the name before.

"She's to be first bridesmaid," Sig interposed, feeling the figure at his side straightening indignantly.

"Oh, yes!" said Wallace, absently.

"You're a horrid thing!" said Belle, severely. "I've told you over and over that Kate Carrolton is going to be first bridesmaid, and you don't display the least interest. Why, don't you know that, as groomsman, you'll have to devote yourself to her—take her to supper, carry her flowers, talk to her all the time, be very attentive? Why don't you ask how she looks—how she acts—what she's going to wear—all about her?"

Wallace laughed.

"How does she look?" he began, obediently.

"Oh, she's——"

Belle stopped. It was in obedience to a nudge from her future lord; but the darkness covered the fact.

"Now, look here," said Sig, seriously. "I'm not going to have Ryder imposed upon. Candour is a cardinal virtue. Don't try to soften the facts. She has red hair, Ryder."

Wallace groaned.

"And freckles?" he murmured.

"And freckles," said Sig, solemnly.

He was pinching Belle's arm industriously, that young lady being on the verge of a giggle.

"Her nose, as I remember it," Sig pursued—"bear up, Ryder—her nose is rather turned-up. And her eyes—well, I never could make out just what colour they are, if they're any."

"Good Heaven!" said Wallace, roused into animation at last. "You don't really mean

to tell me that that's the sort of person you've selected for your first bridesmaid? You're joking," he added, with a ray of hope.

"It's the solemn truth," Sig rejoined.

"She's an old school friend, you know," said Belle—she had recovered her composure. "I had to ask her."

"And you expect me to devote myself to her—take her in to breakfast—carry her bouquet?" said Wallace, with real pathos in his voice. "What have I done to deserve this?"

"She's going to wear a lovely dress," said Belle, consoling. "She wrote me about it—white surah, with a lace front and——"

"Stop there, please," said Wallace, imploringly. "White surah, with red hair and freckles and a turned-up nose!"

Belle merged a titter into a cough.

"You must come round and see her. Let me see—come about half past ten," she said. "You must meet each other before the ceremony, of course."

"Try to get along with it, Ryder," said Sig. "It won't be for long, you know. She's only going to stay a week or so, to keep Mrs. Saunders company after we're gone."

"A week?" Wallace repeated. "You don't suppose I could stand it for a week? I shall start up the lakes the day after to-morrow."

"How horrid of you!" said Belle. "I was just depending on you to make things nice for Kate."

"When you find me making things nice for a girl with red hair," said Wallace, as he rose with a yawn, "you may shoot me on the spot!"

The next morning the Saunders' house was in a state of excitement, from the basement where the caterer was flying about among his hampers, and firing rapid and confusing instructions at the waiters and Mrs. Saunders' cook, to the second storey where in one room the bride was taking a last survey of her dazzling toilet in a long glass, with her bridesmaid hovering over her, and where in another the groom was walking up and down with the nervousness common to persons in like positions, while his best man lounged against the dressing-case, and fanned himself tranquilly.

"You won't be able to get through the ceremony, if you keep on like this, Sig," the latter remarked, with a calm observation of his friend's agitation.

"I shouldn't want to be married every day," said Sig, wiping his pale face. "Is my collar straight? Have you got the ring all right?"

"Here you are!" responded Wallace, producing the little gold band. "I, Sigismund, take thee—Why don't they hurry? I'm crazy to see Miss Carrolton—Carrottop—What's her name? She had a headache and wasn't visible when I called the first thing, you know."

"They're coming," said the bridegroom, looking through the open door, and smoothing his hair hastily. "Come on, Ryder!"

Two white-robed figures floated out of the room across the hall, and met them halfway.

"How do we look, Sig?" said the bride, gaily lifting her snowy bouquet, with its white satin knot, to be admired. "Where's papa—oh, here he comes! Give mamma your arm, Sig. Oh, Kate, I'm forgetting to introduce you. Miss Carrolton, Mr. Ryder. There! now come on."

She took her father's arm, exchanged a wicked smile with her first bridesmaid as the latter bowed to the groomsman, and descended the stairs.

Wallace Ryder bowed, too, with a grace for which he was noted; and raising his eyes to his companion, he found it suddenly impossible to open his lips or to move.

He had seen a great many pretty girls in the course of his experience, but he had never seen one so charmingly lovely as the girl before him.

He forgot that he must offer her his arm and follow the others downstairs; he forgot everything in the mere pleasure of standing still and looking at her.

Red hair? It was a beautiful shade of rich, dark auburn. A turned-up nose? freckles? eyes of no particular colour? Her nose was the prettiest, straightest piece of *retroussé* loveliness he had ever seen. Perhaps, on close examination, there were a few faint specks across its bridge; but they only added to its charm. Her eyes—yes, it was hard to know their colour. They were big and bright and long-lashed; but were they blue or grey—or a wonderful mixture?

The object of his fascinated gaze raised her big bunch of pink roses to her sweet lips to conceal a spreading smile; and putting a hand lightly upon his arm, hurried him after the others, who were half way downstairs.

The big rooms below were empty of all save the other four bridesmaids and a few friends, a scattering of aunts and uncles and cousins.

There were flowers everywhere—bouquets in every possible place, a floral bank hiding the fireplace, a huge bell of waxen blossoms for the bridal party to stand under.

The groomsman, with his eyes on the charming face at his side, grew more and more oblivious to everything else.

Of course they went on to the little village church, but Wallace was not aware that the clergyman was advancing to meet them, was pronouncing the opening "Dearly beloved," until he felt a gentle push from the hand on his arm, and saw Miss Carrolton taking her place gracefully at Belle's side.

The ceremony proceeded, but the groomsman, it is to be feared, was not much impressed with the solemnity of the occasion.

He was not, in fact, listening. He was half a head taller than the groom, Miss Carrolton was taller than Belle; it was not difficult, therefore, to continue to gaze at her over their heads—and he did it.

A nudge from Sig. Oh, yes—the ring!

He drew it out absently, and went on looking at the bridesmaid's lovely profile.

"I pronounce that they are man and wife!"

The young man felt a sudden wild wish that it were he and Miss Carrolton of whom the clergyman had spoken the words.

The ceremony was concluded; the benediction had been pronounced. Miss Belle Saunders was Mrs. Sigismund Maynard.

When they arrived home carriages were rolling up to the door, and smiling, gaily-dressed people were flocking into the rooms, pressing forward to offer congratulations and filling the room with a buzz of chat and laughter.

An hour later, and the wedding festivities were drawing to a close.

Everything had been brilliantly successful. The flowers had been exclaimed over; the caterer had distinguished himself, and the bride was correspondingly happy.

The guests were crowded around the carriage which was to take the newly-wedded pair to the station. The pavement was strewn with rice and an occasional old shoe for several yards around.

The bride, in an exquisite travelling-suit, and the groom, bowing and beaming, leaned from the carriage to exchange parting words, and hand-shaked with everybody.

The bridesmaid and groomsman stood next the carriage-door. The latter had kept steadily at Miss Carrolton's side, calmly defeating one after another of the fascinated gentlemen who he endeavoured to supplant him, and they were beginning to feel very well acquainted.

"I've suffered with you, Ryder," said the groom, in a voice audible only to the quartette. "I know your aversion to Miss Carrolton's style, and I've sympathised with you, believe me."

"But it's almost over, you know," said Belle, encouragingly. "You're going away to-morrow. New scenes will lead you to forget the horrors——"

She caught her chief bridesmaid's eye. Miss Carrolton put her flowers against her charming face and giggled.

The driver was starting up; but the groom leaned out for a last word to his best man.

"Hasn't she red hair? Hasn't she freckles? Isn't her nose—"

The carriage rolled out of hearing.

Four weeks later, Mrs. Sigismund Maynard, in the seaside hotel where her honeymoon trip had landed her temporarily, received a dainty letter, faintly scented, sealed with a "C" on blue wax, and postmarked at Boughton.

It was an extremely short letter. It read as follows:

"DEAR BELLE,—You see I am here yet; your mother won't let me go. I am having a lovely time. "Your affectionate

"KATE."

"P.S.—Mr. Ryder didn't go away, after all.

"P.P.S.—I am engaged to the dear old thing."

WORTH REMEMBERING.—Kind words produce their image in men's souls—and a beautiful image it is. They soothe and comfort the hearer; they shame him out of his unkind feelings. We have not yet begun to use them in such abundance as they ought to be used.

We sometimes hear a man boast of never having known fear; but it is an idle vaunt. It cannot be true; but, if it were, it would bespeak him less, not more manly. One of the bravest soldiers confessed to having felt terrors of fear in his first battle; yet he afterwards swerved not an inch, and his comrades thought him utterly fearless. His courage kept him firm in the path of duty despite his fears.

Do not let yourself follow your desires too eagerly, even for good. What I most desire for you is a certain calmness, which comes from recollection, detachment and love of God. Occupy yourself as little as possible about external matters. Give at proper seasons a quiet, calm attention to all things assigned to your care by Providence; leave the rest. We do much more by quiet, tranquil labour in the presence of God than by the greatest eagerness and over-activity of a restless nature.

SIR DAVID BREWSTER'S CAT.—Margaret Maria Gordon, writing from Nice, says: "My father, Sir David Brewster, had a strong dislike to cats; he said that he felt something like an electric shock when one entered the room. Living in an old mouse-ridden house, I was at last obliged to set up a cat, but on the express condition that it never was to be seen in his study. I was sitting with him one day, and the study door was ajar. To my dismay pussy pushed it open, and, with a most assured air, walked right up to the philosopher, jumped upon his knee, put a paw on one shoulder and a paw upon the other, and then composedly kissed him. Utterly thunderstruck at the creature's audacity, my father ended by being so delighted that he quite forgot to have an electric shock. He took pussy in his closest affections, feeding and tending her as if she were a child. One morning, some years afterward, no pussy appeared at breakfast for cream and fish; no pussy at dinner, and, in fact, months passed on and still no pussy. We could hear nothing of our pet, and we were both inconsolable. About two years afterwards, I was again sitting with my father, when, strange to say, exactly the same set of circumstances happened. The door was pushed gently open, pussy trotted in, jumped on his knee, put a paw on each shoulder, and kissed him. She was neither hungry, thirsty, dusty, nor footsore, and we never heard anything of her intervening history. She resumed her place as household pet for many years, until she got into a diseased state from partaking too freely, it was supposed, of the delicacy of raw flesh, and in mercy she was obliged to be shot. We both suffered so much from this second loss that we never had another domestic pet."

HOW HE MANAGED.

—O—

"I AM SO glad you have come, dearest Lava!"

"And I'm glad to see you, too. How well you are looking! You have grown very pretty since our school-days, my little Helen."

Helen Andrews laughed a low, girlish laugh, which showed her dimples.

"Nobody ever thought of applying the word 'pretty' to you, Lava," she said; "and you grow even lovelier."

The beauty shrugged her graceful shoulders.

"So my gentlemen acquaintances have told me," she answered, with perfect ease.

"They have told you many pleasant things, I have no doubt," Helen said.

And again her beautiful guest shrugged her shoulders.

"They have told me many silly things," she replied; "but I couldn't manage to exist now without at least an occasional compliment. I was wondering if you were quite buried here, Helen. Is there not a chance of a flirtation or two for me in the next six weeks?"

The hot blood rushed over Helen's face in a great, surging wave, then faded from it.

Was this her school-friend—this dainty, beautiful, languid girl, with the pansy-blue eyes and the crimson lips, who, in the first moment of meeting, and after a three years' separation, asked such a question?

"I am afraid you will find but little amusement of that sort in our little village," she answered, a trifle coldly. "We have a few very nice young men; but they are neither idle nor worldly-wise enough to cross weapons with you. Let our youths keep their hearts, Lava."

But Lava Le Grande laughed her low laugh.

"You shall beckon them back when I have gone," she said, indolently, not noticing how the girl's dark head was lifted at her words.

They had been very fond of each other at school, and, parting there, had sworn eternal friendship.

Their paths had not crossed before in the three years that succeeded their leaving school. Now the beauty and social queen had come for six weeks to Helen's little home in the green heart of this country village, where Helen's father had settled years before her birth, when he left college with his diploma, and was so very proud of the M.D. which he could add to his name.

The two girls were in the pleasant, airy room which had been so lovingly prepared for the guest by Helen, and the guest lay back gracefully in a deep chair, her hat and gloves having been laid aside, the sunlight stealing in and flowing over her dainty loveliness, making her hair gleam and her eyes seem more darkly blue under their sweep of lashes.

Suddenly those lashes lifted, and a laughing glance rested on Helen's face.

"Name the eligibles," she said, indifferently. "I can rest while you do so, and then I will change my dress. Who is first?"

"There are the sons of Farmer Dane," began Helen; "good boys, but a trifle bashful."

"I'll have none of them," put in Lava, lazily.

"Then our new chemist is a very handsome man, and unmarried."

"He shall stay so for me. I'll no chemist."

"The editor of our daily paper is—"

"Poor, but worthy, as are all country editors. Oh, how your list appals me!"

"Then the schoolmaster?"

"Helen! Were he another Eugene Aram, I might; but no, I'll no pedagogue."

"Then"—Helen's voice was the least bit reluctant here—"there is my brother's friend, Chancy De Vebre. He has all things, and you cannot help but like him. He has just

taken his degree, and is spending the summer with his uncle, the Rev. Mr. Chancy. Handsome as a prince, he has good blood, is heir to broad lands and rich revenues; is but twenty-four, has nothing to do but amuse himself, and is a brilliant social character; can sing well, plays the guitar and piano; rides like a Centaur, and rows like a—a professional. I think—"

"I think, unless you are romancing, that Mr. Chancy De Vebre will just do. Why did you keep him for the last?—and when do I meet him?"

"This evening; he is to spend it with us."

"Then, dear, leave me. I must make a fascinating toilet, for I intend to captivate him to-night."

"Blest if that isn't the coolest speech I ever heard!" muttered Jack—Helen's big brother—moving leisurely away from the post he had occupied since the girls entered the chamber.

It had not troubled Jack greatly that that position had given him a full benefit of the conversation; trifles never troubled easy-going Jack.

"So she'll 'none of the farmers, the chemist, or the schoolmaster,'" he thought, a sort of grin breaking over his face; "but De Vebre will just do! George! how glad I am I heard her! Might have fallen a victim to her myself, else. But if De Vebre is to be caught by chaff I'm out—that all, my fair beauty."

Chancy De Vebre had been in the little parlour perhaps a-quarter of an hour, when a fair vision of white-robed loveliness floated gracefully in, and he was presented to Miss Le Grande.

The beautiful lashes fell almost instantly, as she gave him a languid hand; but those blue eyes had seen the clear-cut face, the dark grey eyes that met a glance so frankly, the slender but perfectly-knit figure of the stranger; and noting all, Lava smiled a little, telling herself she would have a very pleasant summer, after all.

And she did; looking back upon the six weeks of her stay in Brushtown, she knew, in the years that followed, that she had never been so happy.

Such rides, and rows, and walks! Such mad dashings through a sunset-glow, with a man beside her who was making her life fairer and sweeter! Such idle driftings with the tide, while he recited for her fragments of the grandest poems, or sang for her some old pathetic ballad! Such lingerings along the green lanes in the early evenings, when Chancy De Vebre's voice was like low, wooing melody!

She did not heed that her pretty hostess lost colour as the days went on, and that the dimples showed more rarely in her cheeks. She—Lava—gave thought only to one, and that one was Chancy De Vere.

Jack spoke once to Helen, as brother and sister stood on the wide porch, watching the two figures approaching them in the moon-rise.

"I say, sis, wouldn't you take it for the real thing? Nobody would think it to be a flirtation. They are capital at it, and De Vebre equals Miss Lava."

Helen said nothing, but when the two reached the porch, Jack was standing there alone, whistling vigorously.

"I think I'll have a smoke under the trees," he said, and left them.

Then Chancy drew a chair forward for his companion, and took one himself.

"As you sit there in the moonbeams you make one think of a marble goddess, Miss Le Grande," he said, and her colour changed.

"I am glad I please you," she answered, softly. "I go from here in three days. How many, many times I shall think of this lovely spot, and—and the friends I found here!"

He leaned a little nearer.

"Am I one of them?" he asked.

She lifted her eyes to his face, then they fell to her flowers, a cluster she had gathered, which still bloomed in her hands.

"Can you doubt it?" she questioned, a strange tremour at her heart.

Was this new feeling love? Was she ready to place her life in the hands of this man, who, only a few weeks before, had been a stranger to her?

For the first time in her life Lava Le Grande half shrank from, yet wholly yearned for, an avowal of love; trembled with womanly emotion in the presence of an admirer.

"He is all that man can be; he has all good gifts. I love him, and I will marry him," she told herself, her eyes on her flowers, "Thank you," he said, very gently, and he put forth his hand—take hers? No; but to take a flower from her bouquet. "I am going to bare my heart to you to-night," he went on presently. "May I do so without fear of boring you, Miss Le Grande?"

"You will honour me," she said, softly. "You are so kind." He proceeded to pin the blossom in his coat while speaking. "We men want the sympathy of women so very often, Miss Le Grande. We are helped by it, and supported, when we might otherwise faint and fail. Now, I am not a coward, and yet there is one woman in the world from whose lips I am to hear one little word, which will either gladden me beyond all telling, or make me the least enviable man on earth. You understand me, do you not? I love her so well that I scarcely dare tell her of it. You are a woman; advise me in my strait. How are women won, Miss Le Grande?"

She turned away her face, which was glowing with colour.

"Go to her and tell her of your love; and I—I bid you have no fear. Her heart will answer you," she whispered.

He laid an impulsive hand on the ones which still held the flowers.

"You are her friend," he said. "Has she shown her heart to you? Do you know that I may not fear? She is so sweetly shy, I find it hard to get her to listen to a word from me. Are you sure her heart will answer as I wish?"

The blue eyes lifted suddenly to his face, a touch of fear in them.

The girl's face had grown white.

"Of whom are you speaking?" she asked, in a troubled voice. "I—I do not understand."

"Do you not know? I fancied I had told it to all—that my every word, my every glance, betrayed me! I love your sweet friend, Helen Andrews. Can I win her, Miss Le Grande? Is there a single chance for me? I will own to you that I fear a rejection from her lips as I would not fear sentence of death. As her friend, I ask you, dare I even hope?"

But Miss Le Grande had risen to her feet, allowing the roses to fall unheeded to the floor, her beautiful face perfectly colourless, her eyes full of pain.

"I—I do not know. I am—am ill!" she stammered.

And shrinking from the hand he held towards her she turned from him and glided in.

"Is it acting still, or have I— Pahaw! I'm not coxcomb enough to believe it!" he muttered, looking after her.

But it was not acting, as Lava Le Grande knew then—and knew later, when, in the first frosts of winter, she received cards for the wedding of Helen Andrews and Chancy de Vebre.

A year later she married a millionaire, and Jack smiled grimly when he heard of it.

"After all, Chancy didn't just do it!" he said. "I think I managed that!"

He had.

THE difference between rising at five and seven o'clock in the morning, for the space of forty years, supposing a man to go to bed at the same hour at night, is nearly equivalent to the addition of ten years to a man's life.

NATIONAL MOTTOES.

Honi soit qui mal y pense. This motto, inscribed on a dark blue ribbon, with border, buckle, and pendant of gold, usually surrounds the British national shield. Primarily this buckle and motto formed part of the insignia of the Order of the Garter. The origin of the motto is given as follows:—

About 1350 A.D., Edward III., elated with his victories in France, gave a grand tournament and ball at Windsor Castle. At the ball, Joan, the fair Countess of Salisbury, whilst dancing with the king, by a casual misadventure dropped her garter, whereupon Edward, with happy gallantry, picked it up, and turning round to his laughing courtiers, called out, "*Honi soit qui mal y pense.*" "Evil be to him that thinks evil." Soon after this occurrence the king instituted an order of knighthood similar to the "Round Table," which flourished in the days of King Arthur, and designated it the "Order of the Garter." The buckle already referred to represents the Garter, and this, together with the motto of the Order, is now generally found encircling the royal shield.

Dieu et mon droit. "God and my right," motto of the Royal Shield of the United Kingdom, is said by some authorities to have been first used by Richard I., when besieging Gisors in Normandy, in 1198. Philippe Augustus, King of France, had without right taken that town, which then belonged to England. Richard led on his soldiers to the assault, calling, "God and my right!" and, having succeeded in retaking the town, adopted this cry as his motto, and forthwith it was marshalled with the royal arms, where it has remained ever since.

Nemo me impune lacessit. "No man provokes me with impunity," is one of the royal mottoes of Scotland, taken from the thistle. The other is "In my defence," placed above the Scottish crest—a sitting lion imperially crowned. This latter motto was assumed by James V., and was borne also in the signet ring of Mary, Queen of Scots.

It will generally be found that a man's own good breeding is the best security against other people's ill-manners.

Those who are neither blinded by the mists of passion nor constrained by the close-woven net of prepossession see more clearly, as well as more deeply, than those who are given over to their own fantasies.

OBSERVE, that among all the principal figures in Shakespeare's plays, there is only one weak woman—Ophelia; and it is because she fails Hamlet at the critical moment, and cannot in her nature be a guide to him when he needs her the most, that all the bitter catastrophe follows. And though there are three wicked women among the principal figures—Lady Macbeth, Regan, and Goneril—they are felt at once to be frightful exceptions to the ordinary laws of life; fatal in their influence in proportion to the power for good they have abandoned.

SELF-DEPRECIATION partakes of the same character as self-assumption. Both come from overthought of self, and both vanish when self is merged in something else. Just as soon as we are earnestly anxious for some result we begin to work for it, without stopping to gauge our powers or to think anything at all about them. The mother who ardently loves her child and desires his best good does not spend her time in bewailing her unfitness to take care of him. She begins at once, and does her best, and her power grows with every effort. The business man with a family depending upon him does not delay providing for them because he distrusts his ability to do so; he forgets to consider that, and simply pursues his work as well as he can. So in every instance, if the self-depreciative will cease thinking about themselves at all, and devote all their thought and energy to the duty in hand, they will find their strength and fitness for the work grow with exercise, and the fears which have stood in the way of success will melt away.

LOVE-MAKING.

THE wise man decides that love-making is an art, and may be cultivated. More women are won by judicious flattery than by any other means, for every woman is more or less vain, and she is naturally fond of the man who finds her weakness and handles it with skill.

Let a woman once imagine she has pretty eyes, and if a man will tell her so constantly and artfully, she is certain to have a weakness for him which may be easily fanned into a flame of love, and ardent love at that. This is merely an example.

All women profess to hate men who are jealous, but in this they belie themselves extravagantly.

No woman ever loved a man violently whom she was unable to infect with a sting of the green-eyed monster. It is true that some women are fond of complacent, easy-going, impassionate men, but as a rule such fellows can never inspire the genuine emotion. It is your hot-headed, passionate and impulsive man who can drive a woman to distraction.

A man must be more or less hot-headed; he must be more or less jealous, and more or less passionate, to inspire a woman with the love that burns.

The man who wouldn't kiss a woman, under favourable conditions, is an idiot. It is not meant by this that kissing is at all necessary, or even proper, but it is certainly a part and parcel of love-making.

A pretty girl was heard to say once that she had been devotedly sought after by young Mr. L.—for four years. She was fond of him and admired him for his many excellent qualities, but she finally let him go, because, as she put it, he never had the courage to once squeeze her hand.

There never was perhaps a purer nor better girl than that one, but she was too full of mercury to ever wed a man who lacked the spirit to at least squeeze her hand in a lovable way.

Real women, in fact, care nothing for milk-and-water men, nor do they always worship heroes; but, as I have said, if an intelligent man will make a judicious combination of flattery and ardent devotion, he can win any woman in the world who doesn't hate him for a cause in the beginning.

SOMETHING TO BOOT.—In no other city in the world does the practice of giving customers something "to boot" obtain to the extent that it does in Berlin. The tax on merchants has grown heavier and heavier under the strife of competition, until now it is said to be almost cheaper to buy than to go without. Confection houses give Chinese shawls, hats and satchels; grocers bribe cooks with gifts of soap; butchers give extra slices of ham, and dry goods dealers give dress patterns valuable according as the value of the purchase is much or little. The practice is most general among booksellers, who give toys, dolls, games, pencils, and the like, and recently in one of the Berlin schools the police had actually to be called in, the pupils having got into a violent quarrel over some fire-crackers obtained by one of them as "boot" in a bookseller's shop.

It is a crude but not an uncommon idea that knowledge of every kind is an unmixed good, that the more we can have of it the better, the only limits being the opportunities we can command for obtaining it and the capacity of our minds for holding it. Yet the truth is that the amount of knowledge is perhaps the very last element which in any given case determines its value. In some cases the large quantity is the very thing which renders it not only valueless, but hurtful. Like food, it it must be apportioned to our needs, and a surplus, even of the most wholesome kind, is disastrous. Those who regard knowledge as an end in itself are no wiser than they would be if they regarded food as an end in itself. Both are means to preserve, to improve, to elevate life, and only as they accomplish this object are they worthy of our acceptance.

FACETIÆ.

"He tried to kiss me and I told him to behave," said an irate young lady last night. "Well, did he kiss you?" asked her friend. "No, the idiot; he behaved like a person."

"How did you begin life?" the young man asked the great man. "I didn't begin it," truthfully replied the great man. "It was here when I got here."

"Do cats think?" queries a writer. Yes, they sometimes think the man at the window with the nightcap on is a mighty poor shot with a boot-jack.

THE DUCHESS DE MAINE said to Madame de Staël, "I am very fond of conversation; everybody listens to me, and I listen to nobody."

"Let me see," said a minister who was filling out a marriage certificate and had forgotten the date: "this is the fifth, is it not?" "No, sir," replied the bride, with some indignation, "this is only my second!"

"I met Mr. Smith in a shabby coat a while ago. He has not failed, has he?" "Oh! no; he only puts on that coat when he goes to the assessors to give in his property for the assessment."

"Love him? No, mamma, I hate him! The impudent young scamp." "Then, I suppose, my dear, you will break your engagement with him?" "No, indeed not; I shall marry him." "Well, well, I didn't believe you hated him as badly as that."

A GENTLEMAN, in apologising for language used, said: "I did not mean to say what I did, but the fact is that, as you will see, I have had the misfortune to lose some of my front teeth, and the words slip out of my mouth every now and then without my knowing it."

SERVANT: "The butcher's boy is at the door, sir, and says as how his master wants some money on that old meat bill at once, sir." Head of the house (slicing off a tender cut of unpaid beef): "Well, tell him to call again some other time. I can't be bothered with bills when I am at dinner."

TEACHER: "So you can't do a simple sum in arithmetic? Now, let me explain it to you. Suppose eight of you have together forty-eight apples, thirty-two peaches, and sixteen melons, what would each of you get?" "Cholera morbus," replied Johnny Fizzletop, who is addicted to that malady.

WIFE: "Aren't you getting a little bald, dear?" Husband: "Yes, but I must expect it at my time of life." Wife: "Nonsense! you needn't be bald for ten years yet if you would take proper care of your hair. In justice to me, I think you ought to try some remedy." Husband: "Why in justice to you, my dear?" Wife: "Because if you should become bald I would be placed in a very false position."

An editor was attacked by a tramp the other day, and in crying out for help was delighted to see a man running towards the spot. The tramp, however, continued to maltreat the editor, while the stranger hovered near, but failed to close in. "Why don't you help me?" exclaimed the discomfited editor. "Because I can't tell which of you is the tramp and which ain't," was the candid reply.

"Mrs. PRIGGINS," said a lodger to her landlady at the seaside, "I happened to leave the key in the cupboard last night, and I find all my tea and sugar gone this morning." "Looking the things up, ma'am, shows a want of confidence in the people around you; so when you leave the cupboard open they takes advantage of it." "But it was just the same when I left it open. Everything disappeared." "In that case, ma'am, no doubt people thought you meant 'em to share and share alike with you." So Mrs. P. had her lodger both ways.

THE GREATEST QUESTION OF TO-DAY FOR A WIFE.—"My dear, what will you have for dinner?"

HIS LORDSHIP: "How old are you, madam?" Witness: "I have no personal knowledge of my age, and hearsay testimony, I understand, is not accepted in this court."

"Is this a singing doll?" asked she of the shopman. "Yes, miss." "How do you make it sing?" "Just as you would any other young woman. By pressing it."

A LITTLE boy went to his first tea-party. Upon his hostess asking him how he liked his tea, he replied, "It is very nice, but it tastes very much of the water."

DURATION OF THE HONEYMOON.—A sentimental bride put the following question to her mother on the eve of her wedding:—"How long does the so-called honeymoon last?" Her practical mamma replied, "Till you ask your husband for money."

When the young gentleman who styles himself the English Goethe was asked why he did not write something equal to Goethe's, he testily answered, "Because I haven't the mind to do it."

SIR WALTER SCOTT once gave an Irishman a shilling when sixpence would have been sufficient. "Remember, Pat," said Sir Walter, "you owe me sixpence." "May your honour live till I pay you!" was the reply.

A COUNTRY gentleman who had tarried too long at a vine supper found his wife in a high state of nervousness awaiting his return. She said, "Here I've been waiting and rocking in a chair until my head swims round like a top!" "Jess so where I've been," responded he; "it's in the atmosphere."

As the late Professor Hamilton was one day walking near Aberdeen, he met a well-known individual of weak intellect named Jemmy. "Pray," said the professor, how long can a person live without brains?" "I dinna ken," replied Jemmy, scratching his head. "How auld are ye yourself?"

"MOLLIE, I wish you would be a better little girl," said a fond father to his little daughter; "you have no idea how sorry I am that mamma has to scold you always!" "Don't worry about it, papa," was the reply of the little angel; "I am not one of those sensitive children. Half the time I don't hear what she says."

FIRST BRIDESMAID: "You'll never tell?" Second bridesmaid: "Of course not. I never do, you know." First bridesmaid: "Well, she told me—in strict confidence, understand—that, though Jack was poor, they were going to travel all the summer and stop at the best hotels, and that they got the money by selling their wedding presents. Now, I wonder if my speons are paying part of the expenses."

A WITNESS, who was called to prove the correctness of a doctor's bill, was asked if the doctor did not make several unnecessary visits—did not continue his professional calls after the patient was out of danger. To which he replied after a little reflection: "Well—no. The fact is, you see, the patient wouldn't be entirely out of danger as long as the doctor kept visiting him."

A COLONEL asked a corporal what his father was. "A farmer," was the reply. "It's a pity he didn't make you follow his trade," said the colonel. "What was your father?" asked the corporal. "A gentleman," answered the colonel. "What a pity he didn't make you one, too," was the neat retort.

An old lady was recently brought as a witness before a bench of magistrates, and when asked to take off her bonnet, obstinately refused to do so, saying, "There's no law compelling a woman to take off her bonnet." "Oh," imprudently replied one of the magistrates, "you know the law, do you? Perhaps you would like to come up and sit here and teach us?" "No, I thank you, sir," said the woman, tartly; "there are old women enough there now."

A MOST unsatisfactory piece of sculpture is the "bust" of a boiler.

THERE is a shopman so poor that he never stands on more than one foot at a time, for fear that he may wear out his boots too quick.

SMITH: "I notice that milkmen as a rule wear very heavy shoes." "Brown: Yes. They do it on purpose. Because it would be rather suggestive if you could say they used pumps."

WEE FANNY bit her tongue one day and came in crying bitterly. "What is it?" asked her mother. "Oh, mamma!" she said, "my teeth stepped on my tongue!"

"ROBBIE," said the visitor, "have you any little brothers and sisters?" "No," replied wee Robbie; "I'm all the children we've got."

VERNON, the great French chef, used to say to those customers who praised his dinners: "Never boast of having dined well till the next day."

It was a Frenchman who, contentedly laying his head upon a large stone jar for a pillow, replied to one who inquired if it was not rather hard, "Not at all, for I have stuffed it with hay."

"DAN," said a little four-year-old, "give me sixpence to buy a monkey." "We've got one monkey in the house now," replied the elder brother. "Who is it, Dan?" asked the little fellow. "You," was the reply. "Then give me sixpence to buy the monkey some nuts." The brother could not resist.

An honest country gentleman said to Richardson, the painter, "I want you to come to my house, for I have just bought a picture by Rubens. That fool Brown says it's a copy! If any man living dares to say it's a copy I'll break every bone in his skin. Now, I want you to see it, and give me your candid opinion."

"So I may really have the next walk? So good of you, Mrs. Marsham; I know how rarely you consent to walk with anybody. I am greatly favoured." "Not at all, Mr. De Gausque—I don't object to walking, in general. It is only my husband's absurd jealousy, you know."

A MAN OF EXPEDIENTS.—"My dear Baron, whatever are you doing? smoking a couple of cigars at once!" "You see, my friend, in this benighted hole, there are no cigars to be got at ten soldi such as I generally smoke, and so I am compelled to smoke a couple together at five soldi apiece."

A POLITICIAN in soliciting votes, came upon one of the opposition, who said: "What! I vote for you! I'd sooner vote for the Evil One himself!" To this the politician gently answered: "But in case your friend should not be a candidate I shall then hope for your assistance."

DEAN MANNEL'S sister relates that one evening Chandler having played something on the piano was requested to sing, which he declined to do. Another person pressed him, and suggested, "If you can think of nothing else, sing us the Hundredth Psalm." "No. I should only murder it." This produced a third entreaty, and a more resolute refusal, whereupon Mansel came to his friend's rescue, remarking that "Chandler naturally declines to murder all people that on earth do dwell."

"DID I love any other girl?" repeated a prospective bridegroom, in answer to the fearful query of his intended. "Why, darling, of course not. This heart knew no wakening until the sunshine of your love streamed in and woke it to ecstasy." And then he went home, and said to himself, "I must hurry them things out of the way right off, or there'll be a row;" and he collected a pile of letters, written in all kinds of feminine hands with lots of faded flowers, and photographs, and looks of hair, and bits of faded ribbon, and other things, and when the whole collection had been crammed into the kitchen grate, he drew a deep sigh, and said to himself, "There goes all that's left of fourteen undying loves—let 'em flicker."

SOCIETY.

THE QUEEN, it is said, has purchased the estate of Birkhall from the Prince of Wales, a property which extends to 6,800 acres, and was bought for his Royal Highness about thirty years ago by the advice of the Prince Consort.

At Ballater a handsome new bridge spanning the Dee is approaching completion. The old structure was of wood and was injured and nearly washed away by recent floods. The Queen is expected to open the new bridge.

THE EMPRESS OF RUSSIA upon her arrival at Kremsier looked wonderfully like her sister, the Princess of Wales. She wore lilac with pale pink trimmings, and a bonnet to match. The Empress of Austria awaited the arrival of the party on the platform of the station. She was dressed in brown satin trimmed with black lace; a close-fitting velvet jacket to match with silver fox fur at the collar; and bonnet of gold satin, with yellow and brown tips. When these ladies joined the Imperial sportsmen at luncheon the Empress of Austria was in black velvet with black straw hat, and the Czarina, looking more like our Princess than ever, wore a blue dress with white spots and a white straw hat.

NEXT year London will have two great exhibitions. One has been in course of organisation for the past year by the American residents in this country, and will be representative of the art, industry, and culture of the United States. The inventories will in turn give way in 1886 to the Indian and Colonial Exhibition, which is expected to be as great a success as its predecessors.

A VERY stylish wedding was that celebrated at Lynwode, of Ethel, only daughter of Lieut.-Colonel Conway-Gordon, to Mr. Charles Arthur Swan, J.P. The bride was attired in a costume of white poult de soie, the front of which was covered with a deep flounce of lace.

A MARRIAGE will shortly take place between Miss Amy Venour, eldest daughter of Sir William Bellairs, of Strawberry Hill, and Sir David Tennant, Speaker of the Legislative Assembly, Cape of Good Hope.

ACCORDING to present arrangements Prince and Princess of Battenberg will visit Edinburgh in the autumn, and then be the guests of the Dowager Duchess of Roxburghe at Broomhouse Park for a few days.

The marriage of Lieut. E. N. Price, R.N., of H.M.S. *Carysfort*, with Miss Josephine Raphaella Messina, second daughter of the late Count Rosaride Messina, was celebrated in the private chapel of the Archbishop's Palace at Naples on the 24th ult. The bride wore a dress of white satin and damask richly embroidered and trimmed with Brussels lace; her veil being fastened over a diamond tiara with stars of the same precious stones.

PRINCE HENRY OF BATTENBERG has been appointed honorary colonel of the 5th Volunteer Battalion of the Hampshire Regiment, or Princess Beatrice Isle of Wight Volunteers.

THE infant daughter of Major the Hon. H. C. and Mrs. Legge was christened on the 28th ult., at the Guards' Chapel, Wellington Barracks, the Queen, who was represented by the Dowager Marchioness of Ely, standing sponsor and giving the child, who was named Victoria Alexandrina, a pearl and diamond cross, which she wore on the occasion.

THE EARL and COUNTESS DE GREY (Gladys Countess of Lonsdale), on the occasion of their marriage, were presented at Studley Royal with a silver tea service by the tenantry on the Yorkshire estates of the Marquis of Ripon, by whom a large number were entertained to tea in the Abbey Cloisters. The Marquis and Marchioness, who were accompanied by the Earl and Countess de Grey, Lord and Lady Charles Beresford, Lady Herbert, &c., presided, and were present at the entertainments which preceded the meal.

STATISTICS.

POPULATION IN GERMANY.—According to the "Statistical Year-Book for the German Empire" the population of Germany was in 1872 41,228,606 persons; in 1883 it had risen to 45,862,000. In eleven years, therefore, the increase of the population was 4,634,000; and yet during those eleven years, there had been a very large emigration from Germany. The emigration takes two forms—across the land frontier into neighbouring countries, and from German ports from places beyond the sea. The authorities are unable to ascertain the emigration over the land frontier; but the sea emigration has risen very largely. In 1871 only 75,912 persons left German ports and the port of Antwerp for countries beyond the sea; the next year it rose to 125,650; but then it rapidly declined, until in 1877 only 21,964 persons emigrated. The number then began to increase until in 1881 there were as many as 210,547; and since that time there has been a slow decrease. The German Statistical Department has endeavoured to ascertain the number of German residents abroad, and it computes this a little over 2,500,000, of which nearly 2,000,000 are in the United States. In Switzerland there are as many as 95,262 Germans, in Austria 93,442, and in France 91,988. The number of Germans abroad is smaller than is generally supposed. Considering how continuous the German emigration to the United States has been, and how long it has lasted, it might have been supposed that the Germans in the United States would have now exceeded 2,000,000.

GEMS.

THE most divine light only shineth on those minds which are purged from all worldly dross and human uncleanness.

IRRESOLUTION in the schemes of life which offer themselves to our choice, and inconstancy in pursuing them, are the greatest causes of our unhappiness.

IT is an easy thing to accept as true or best what we wish to be so, without sifting the evidence; but to judge wisely takes both labour and time.

IF we hope for what we are not likely to possess, we act and think in vain, and make life a greater dream and shadow than it really is.

HOUSEHOLD TREASURES.

HOW TO CLEAN PAINT.—Smear a piece of flannel in common whiting, mixed to the consistency of common paste, in warm water. Rub the surface to be cleaned quite briskly, and wash off with pure cold water. Grease spots will in this way be almost instantly removed, as well as other filth, and the paint will retain its brilliancy and beauty unimpaired.

GREEN TOMATO PICKLES.—To one peck of green tomatoes add eight medium-sized onions and six Chili pepper pods. Cut them in slices, sprinkle thoroughly with salt, and let them remain over night. In the morning drain off the juice, cover with vinegar, and boil five minutes. Again drain off the liquid, thus preventing fermentation. Place in a stone jar, and cover with cold vinegar. To all lovers of high-seasoned condiments this will prove desirable.

POACHED EGGS.—Break your egg into a tea-cup previously well buttered, stand it into a frying-pan of boiling water up to the middle of the cup; as soon as the white hardens it is done; put a knife gently around the edge and slip the egg on to a plate; it is rather more trouble to dress them this way, but repays you well, as they come out nice and compact, and do not look so ragged as when broken into the pan of water, the usual mode of cooking them.

MISCELLANEOUS.

MEN and women, to lead worthy lives, must have a just respect for themselves and a just respect for others. Whatever tends to realise and to strengthen these promotes human welfare.

EVERY practical man knows that self-denial of a certain kind must be constantly practised in life. The small object must be foregone for the sake of the greater, the immediate pleasure for the sake of the remote—nay, the personal pleasure for the sake of the pleasure which is generous and sympathetic. But the timid superstition which sets up self-denial divorced from all rational ends as a thing good and right in itself, which makes us afraid of enjoyment as such—this is absurd.

How to be cheerful—that is, how to be fairly content in existing circumstances—is the problem which one must solve for himself. It may seem a hard task; and certainly no mere act of volition and no direct effort can accomplish it. We cannot change our low spirits into higher or our mournful feelings into cheery ones by simply determining to do so; but we can apply our force to bear upon the conditions on which they rest, we can put to flight many causes of dejection and nourish many germs of serenity and comfort.

In order to be a successful teacher of boys, it is necessary to be their friend. It is necessary not only to take an interest in seeing that their lessons are properly recited, but to be sure also that they understand what they are doing and take an interest in it; make them feel that it is their business now, and that their future successes in life depends on their doing their work well in the present. Boys like a friend, not an overseer.

A REMARKABLE TREE.—The tallow tree is a native of China. In the land of Chusan quantities of oil and tallow are extracted from its fruit, which is gathered when the tree has lost its leaves. The twigs bearing the fruit are cut down and carried to a farmhouse, where the seed is stripped off and put into a wooden cylindrical box, open at one end, and pierced with holes at the opposite one. The box is then suspended in a cylindrical kettle containing water, and the diameter of which differs but little from that of the box. The water is then made to boil, and the steam, penetrating into the box, softens the seeds and facilitates the separation of the tallow. After about a quarter of an hour's exposure to steam, the seeds are poured into a steam mortar, where they are stirred about until all the tallow has been separated into a semi-liquid state. It is afterwards poured into a cylinder with a hole at the bottom, through which it is driven by the action of the press. It comes out perfectly white, free from all impurities, and soon becomes solid.

FLOWER GARDENS OF LONDON.—In parts of Essex and Surrey are the flower gardens where acres of roses are cultivated for the scent, where carnations and pinks, picotees, cornflowers, wallflowers, are grown, to be sold in market bunches in London. These flower fields, with their endless variety of hues, filling the air with delicious fragrance, with the busy figures of men, women, and children plucking them, make a most pleasing picture. Who has not welcomed the advent of the primrose-girl? Long before the swallow has thought of returning from his southern home, she, in her faded plaid shawl and rusty hat, appears with her basket of primroses to tell us of spring. On some of the southern roads leading into London, these picturesque women may be seen in groups, in the cold grey light of a February morning, trudging along with their baskets of primroses, and some with babies suspended by a belt from their shoulders. As the season advances, so they vary their wares, now selling the primrose, now the wallflower or the violet, now the watercress.

NOTICES TO CORRESPONDENTS.

H. J. H.—Declined with thanks.

H. H. B.—The cigar flirtation is unknown to us.

Miss B. (Torquay).—"Nil desperandum" is the Latin for "never despair."

E. J. R. M.—Try liquid ammonia, applied vigorously with a piece of cloth.

R. R.—Very beautiful penmanship, as you are doubtless aware. The spelling, however, is faulty.

C. C.—The offer is declined with thanks, as we are bountifully supplied with material of all kinds.

N. G.—The use of hair-removing compounds is decidedly harmful; consequently we respectfully decline to furnish a recipe for their manufacture.

MADCAP VIOLET.—Do not use any sold, but consult a respectable surgeon, who will tell you whether they can be removed with safety.

B. M. M.—It is a composition which becomes malleable in warm water, but what it is composed of we do not know.

HASTE.—1 and 2. Take a good tonic under medical advice. 3. Yes, provided a stamped addressed envelope is forwarded with them. 4. Fair writing, but rather slovenly.

C. R.—Hebe, the heathen goddess of youth, is in mythology said to have been created by Juno, cupbearer of all the gods, but from this office was disclaimed by Jupiter for misbehaving herself; she was succeeded in her office of cupbearer by Ganymede.

R. V. S.—1. Light travels much faster than sound. When a cannon is fired off at a distance we see the flash and some time afterwards hear the sound. 2. All light moves with the same speed; the light of a candle goes just as fast as the light of the sun.

F. F.—Bathe your feet in a weak solution of permanganate of potash (one scruple of salt in eight ounces of water), and the offensive odour will be remedied. The addition of ammonia to the water in which one's feet are washed are also recommended for the same purpose.

F. C. P.—New Zealand was discovered by Tasman in 1642. From his time the whole country, except that part of the coast which was seen by him, remained altogether unknown, and was by many supposed to make part of a southern continent, till 1769, when it was circumnavigated by the celebrated Captain Cook.

C. C. P.—1. One method of curing an ingrowing nail is to introduce a small piece of dry, compressed sponge under the edge of the nail. This sponge will gradually swell, and thus press outward the nail-end until it assumes its natural position. 2. Your penmanship is not adapted to the requirements of neat, clean book-keeping.

N. B.—An excellent cement for mounting geological specimens is prepared by melting in an iron pot equal parts of common pitch and gutta serena. It may be kept liquid under water, or solid, to be melted when wanted for use. It is not attacked by water, and adheres firmly to wood, stone, glass, porcelain, ivory, leather, woollen, cotton, and linen fabrics.

L. L.—There are so many freckle-removing remedies recommended by various authorities that it becomes a difficult matter to say which is the most efficacious. We have heard the following mixture spoken of in glowing terms of approval: Scrape horse-radish into a cup of cold, sour milk, let it stand twelve hours, strain and apply two or three times a day.

PATRIE.—The making of glass dates back to the earliest antiquity, and no trustworthy authority can be quoted as to whom the honour of the invention belongs. The oldest specimens are Egyptian, and it has been proved that these people had a knowledge of glass-blowing 3,500 years ago. They also made glazed pottery at that early age in the world's history.

C. S.—You are at liberty to break the engagement if you feel inclined to do so. A hasty and passionate temper is not a desirable gift, and its frequent exhibition towards yourself for trivial causes should admonish you of the danger to be encountered if you unite your fate with that of the young man referred to.

M. D. L.—To cook soft crabs, take off the claws, wash, wipe, and open them, and after removing the spongy part and sand bag, season inside and outside with salt and cayenne pepper; then close them, and fry in fresh butter until there is a light brown on both sides. Send to table hot.

A. R.—1. A gentleman may keep his hat on when handing a lady to a carriage, even though your friend argues that etiquette does not allow of it. It is absolutely necessary for him to do so, unless he has been endowed with three hands—a freak of nature seldom if ever seen. 2. When a marriage engagement is broken off, all letters, portraits and gifts should be returned by each party. 3. Dark-brown hair.

B. H. H.—The expression, "I will die in the last ditch," is ascribed to William of Orange. According to the historian, Hume, when Buckingham urged the inevitable destruction which hung over the United Provinces, and asked William whether he did not see that the Commonwealth was ruined, the prince replied: "There is one certain means by which I can be sure never to see my country's ruin—"I will die in the last ditch."

S. P. S.—A volunteer officer, as a volunteer officer, cannot claim the right of presentation at court. The Queen, however, occasionally appoints a day for their special reception. Many volunteer officers are presented at court, but it is only in the right of their social standing. The question was settled long since by the War Minister.

N. P. W.—1. Soft curl-papers will not cut the hair. 2. Use good, pure sweet oil. 3. We answer correspondents with all speed; as, however, we have so frequently stated in these columns, it is not possible for a reply to appear the same week as sent. 4. Be yourself the first to hold forth the hand of peace and friendship. Handwriting too large to be ladylike.

N. J. L.—Eggs, convent fashion, should be done like this:—Boil four eggs for ten minutes, put them in cold water, peel and skin thin one onion, put into a frying-pan about one ounce of butter; when melted add the onions, a teaspoonful of flour, half a pint of milk, a little salt and pepper; then add the eggs, cut into six pieces each, crossways; serve on toast.

C. R. R.—To make a Swiss pudding boil four or five apples very tender, butter the dish, place in a layer of bread-crumbs, then to the apples add a little butter, nutmeg, and sugar; place those on the bread-crumbs, then another layer of crumbs, with pieces of butter on the top, bake in a slow oven for over a quarter-of-an-hour; it may be eaten hot or cold.

THE MIGHT-HAVE BEEN.

No longer, rose-embowered and bright,
Pale memory flings her portals free
To fairy scenes of golden light!
And sparkles of the summer sea.

The arches grey are overgrown,
The trellised vines are aere and thin,
Where through the vision marks alone
The shadows of the Might-Have Been.

Where once the jowled hours in troops
Sped lightly on, with jest and laugh,
The pilgrim form of sorrow stoops
And falters on his feeble staff.
Dark, troubled Care a-muttering sits,
And Folly, hand-in-hand with Sin,
Now ghost-like o'er the threshold flits
To mock us with the Might-Have Been.

From ruined tower and shattered fane
Regret, the solemn raven, crows,
And bat-winged messengers of pain
Beat the dull air with ceaseless strokes:
The fatal gulf we blindly crossed
Agate in all their woe are seen,
And phantoms of the loved and lost
Smile sadly from the Might-Have Been.

Close, Memory, close thy portals grey,
And o'er my soul oblivion cast,
Or send dark tears to blot away
The vistas of the bitter past!
Wild, wild regrets, but all in vain,
For that sorrows we ne'er may win!
Oh, speechless heritage of pain—
The anguish of the Might-Have Been!

N. U.

N. D.—Yes, in an extended signification, natural history is that science which investigates the peculiarities of all bodies that we can see, but the term is generally restricted to the external description of objects of nature, whether vegetable, animal, or mineral; it is consequently divided into three branches; first, geology and mineralogy; second, botany; and third, zoology.

"UNHAPPY" wishes to know if he can get a divorce from a very bad wife. Your case is indeed a sad one, but the offence you allege having occurred ten years ago, and you having lived with your wife ever since, you have, we fear, condoned, and so legally pardoned her. For her interposition you have no legal remedy; try kindness, persuasion, and, moreover, good example.

L. L. S.—Metallurgy is the art of extracting metals from their ores and adapting them to various processes of manufacture. The miner first extracts the ores from the earth, and, by mechanical processes of dressing, frees them from foreign matter more or less completely, so as to render them fit for treatment by the metallurgist. The best books on metallurgy are "Perry's Metallurgy," "Karsten's System," and "Le Play's Traité de Metallurgy."

J. V.—There is nothing to a serious mind more soothing and consolatory than to look upon a village church on the summit of a sloping hill; its ivy-covered tower rising above everything else imparts the idea of a patriarch overlooking the village. What more pleasant than to hear the bells ringing forth their summons to enter? and, on approaching the porch, and listening to the swelling hymn, to think of the Saviour's glorious words, "Come, unto me, all ye that are weary and heavy-laden, and I will give you rest?"

H. T.—Like flakes of snow that fall unperceived, the apparently unimportant events of life succeed each other; as the snow gathers so are our habits formed. No one action creates, however it may exhibit, a man's character; but as a tempest may hurl an avalanche down a mountain and overwhelm the inhabitants and their dwellings, so passion, acting upon the elements of mischief, which bad habits have brought together imperceptibly, will and must overthrow the edifice of truth and virtue.

S. M.—The far-famous Eddystone Lighthouse, off the port of Plymouth, was erected during the years 1684-9. It was destroyed in the terrible tempest of November 27, 1718. It was rebuilt by Act of Parliament, and all ships were obliged to pay one penny per ton inward and outward towards supporting it. It was again burned in 1755, and again in 1770. After this it was built of stone, in 1774, and has quite recently been again rebuilt.

W. C.—The great use and advantage of wit is to render the owner of it agreeable, by making him instrumental to the happiness of others; but he who affects to be always witty sometimes renders himself ridiculous. Wit is in the hands of an artist like sweet music, commanding, soothing, and modulating passion into harmony and peace; but this is not its only use, it is also a sharp sword to be used against ignorance and folly.

E. D. R.—The 14th of February, or "lover's day," as it will ever be called, is of doubtful origin, but of unquestionably ancient date. St. Valentine was a bishop of the Roman Church, and suffered martyrdom under Claudius II., at Rome, A.D. 271. He was especially distinguished for his love and charity; it is therefore supposed that the custom of choosing friends and lovers had its origin from a kindly remembrance of this good bishop.

G. C.—By no means listen to the advice or addresses of the soldier who wishes you to marry him "right off" in despite of your mother and your father, whom you expect home from California shortly. Naught but grief could come of such a proceeding, the more especially as you don't seem "quite to know whether you love him or not." At sixteen, however "gushing" in heart, you surely have plenty of time before you; remember that to "marry in haste is to be late in repent."

L. D. M.—1. Cardinal Richelieu, who has been so frequently utilised by novelists and dramatists—to wit, Lord Lytton and James—was one of the greatest of French Prime Ministers. He it was, in conjunction with his sovereign, who initiated the European policy of the balance of power; so great was his power, and firm his will, that his name was for a time the terror of Europe. 2. At present neither your handwriting and orthography is fit for a merchant's office; by perseverance, however, they would soon become so.

H. T. M.—Cardinal Wolsey, the celebrated, ambitious, and unfortunate Prime Minister of Henry VIII., is said to have been the son of a butcher. He was educated at Oxford. His rise dated from the time he was appointed tutor to the son of the Marquis of Dorset, by whom he was introduced to a Sir John Nefant, treasurer of Calais (which at that period belonged to England). The knight introduced him to the King, who made him his chief minister. The Cardinal founded Christ's Church College, Oxford, built Hampton Court Palace, and died in the year 1530.

N. T. C.—Christmas is an exclusively English institution, no other nation commemorates it in the same way. In France, and other countries, New Year's Day eclipses the solemnities of Christmas; it is pre-eminently the case in Scotland, where Christmas obtains very little consideration. America, too, has lost much of the pure religious feeling with which this anniversary is kept in the mother country. Let us hope that our mode of observing Christmas may long be preserved, as bearing witness to two points in our national character—namely, the importance we give to the element of family and domestic life, and the firm hold which the tenets of our religion retain upon the national mind.

F. F.—Take the advice of your aunt, who evidently speaks with all kindness; want of energy is a great and common cause of domestic discomfort. The best laid fire will give no heat, and dress no food, unless it is lighted; so the clearest ideas and purest intentions will produce no corresponding actions without that energy which gives power to all that is of value. Those who do not possess it, and some are constitutionally destitute of it, would do well to ask their own conscience what compensating virtues they could substitute for it; pretty faces and graceful language, attractive though they may be, and possibly gain admirers, will not satisfy the requisitions or secure the social happiness of perhaps exacting husbands, into which ardent lovers are often transformed.

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